

Local Growth Plan: Norfolk Economic Strategy, Executive Summary, 2024-2029 – accessible version

Foreword

The world is changing.

Norfolk is perfectly placed to be a major contributor to the UK economy. With strengths in clean energy, agri-food, financial services, advanced manufacturing and engineering and digital technology, the county will play a leading role in the industries of the future. Recognised for international excellence, we hold our sectors in high regard. We will use our ambitions, opportunities and expertise to leverage investment to become a hub of high value economic activity.

With our diverse and outward-looking economy, over 100 miles of coastline, historic and cultural assets, rural landscapes, coastal communities, market towns and three urban centres (including the iconic medieval city of Norwich), Norfolk boasts a unique and distinctive identity, strengthened by its people's passion and pride of place.

Vision and appetite

County, district, borough and city councils have long worked collaboratively and effectively with businesses, our universities and colleges, and community and voluntary organisations to create a successful and forward-looking economy. Collectively, we recognise our potential and our opportunities. We have the vision, appetite and ability to deliver significant growth for the county and the country.

Norfolk's diverse economy and specialist strengths mean there are few places so uniquely equipped to make impactful contributions to the major challenges facing the UK and the world in the 21st century: food and energy security, healthy ageing, climate change, and rapid technological advances. Together with our business community, we will continue to address the ever-growing market demands brought by these challenges, and to be a world-renowned centre of research excellence.

We also recognise our challenges. Not everyone in our county has the right life chances, and too many of our residents are unable to access good jobs, healthcare and the chance to learn new skills.

Like other rural and coastal areas, Norfolk has faced historical imbalances of underfunding. Consequently, Norfolk lacks key infrastructure in areas such as housing, power, roads and other elements necessary for business growth. This infrastructure deficit has hampered Norfolk's economy and, as a prerequisite for economic growth, this strategy seeks to address this critical issue.

We can and must do better.

Opportunity

It is our firm belief that developing our infrastructure, investing in public transport, joining-up education, skills and jobs, providing support for our businesses, managing our land and water resilience, and looking after our environment, will enable our county to grow and our people to live well.

It is with great pleasure that we introduce Norfolk's Economic Strategy 2024-2029, the central mission of which is to improve productivity, to drive growth and improved standards of living. But we don't believe we have to choose between a healthy economy and a healthy county. So, the strategy is not only focused on increasing Gross Value Added (GVA), but it also aims to drive and shape economic growth for the wider benefit of the people, communities and businesses in Norfolk, and our natural environment and heritage. This strategy acts as our Local Growth Plan, identifying local priorities and the key role it will play in the Government's new Modern Industrial Strategy which seeks to ensure growth in every part of the UK. It closely aligns to the Government's Five Missions in shaping our ambitions, including Norfolk's key role in making the UK an offshore clean energy superpower, and breaking down barriers to opportunity and kickstarting economic growth.

The strategy also highlights the significance of improving productivity and proactively addressing health inequality. We will work with government to achieve sustained high growth for our region, cement our role as an offshore clean energy superpower, build a health sector suitable for our needs and challenges, and remove barriers to opportunity for all, whilst ensuring the safety and prosperity of Norfolk's residents.

This strategy is just a start. We are building a vision for the long-term future of the county, an ambition that cannot be achieved by any one organisation, one that needs

us to work closely together to deliver impact for our county, making the most of our collective strengths and powers.

This is our time. This is Norfolk's time.

Councillor Kay Mason Billig, Leader of Norfolk County Council
Nick Steven-Jones, Chair of Norfolk Business Board
Councillor Carl Smith, Chair of Norfolk Leaders Group

Vision

We want Norfolk to be...

A more inclusive, high productivity economy

Alongside partners, we will work collaboratively to improve the quality of work, remove barriers to employment and enable an enterprising culture which will help people of all ages into work. We also want private and public investment in Norfolk to grow. Not only will this enable us to actively tackle health and economic inequalities, but it will also drive growth through unlocking the potential of residents and communities that are currently held back.

Centre of Excellence for Research and Innovation

Norfolk is home to pioneering activity. The Norwich Research Park is the largest single-site concentration of research in the vital fields of food, health and life sciences in Europe. Hethel, home to both Hethel Engineering and Lotus Cars, is renowned for its engineering prowess. Exciting development plans in Hethel, which could leverage over £750m of foreign direct investment, will create over 500 jobs and safeguard the area as a centre for sports car operations.

UK leader in offshore clean energy production and climate change adaptation

We will support the UK's transition to Net Zero through renewable energy, whilst including our communities and businesses in the decarbonisation journey. We want to protect our natural environment, improve biodiversity and invest in natural capital. We will also lobby for access to power that currently bypasses Norfolk, via the grid, benefitting local communities and businesses.

A major cluster for the UK's agri-food and agri-tech sector, with a flourishing supply chain of local firms and farmers

Norfolk's Agri-Food and Agri-Tech sectors are a major asset for the county. The Research Park, Food Enterprise Park and Easton College are all state-of-the-art facilities specialising in food science. We will build on our wealth of expertise across the agricultural sector and support it to play a major role in biodiversity net gain, innovation, diversification and food security.

A European leader in financial services

Norwich has one of the UK's largest general insurance sectors outside London, which generates approximately £1.6 billion GVA (20% of the city's GVA), with 12,000 jobs. Norfolk is home to 24 FinTech firms, including the highest proportion of InsurTech firms (16%) of any English region outside of London. Our FinTech cluster has the potential to grow to between 50-70 firms by 2027.

An international and domestic tourism destination for the UK with growing value and expanding offer

We will build on Norfolk's rich heritage and culture, while enhancing tourism opportunities. Tourism is one of Norfolk's largest sectors and comprises nearly 20 percent of all jobs in the county. We want to boost this further and make Norfolk an all-year, sustainable and accessible holiday destination as well as continuing to be an attractive, vibrant place for Norfolk's residents. This will drive increased job opportunities and job retention in areas where it is most needed and provide vital support for our high streets and town centres. We will also support the digitalisation of businesses within our Culture, Heritage and Visitor Economy sector.

A major growth corridor and extension of the London to Cambridge growth corridor

The corridor consists of large-scale sites, growing clusters in advanced manufacturing and engineering and digital tech which are driven by strong research and innovation links. We aim to accelerate growth through supporting the incubation of early-stage tech companies and grow on space to scale-up, providing access to much needed support. Norfolk is also home to incubation and innovation support services such as Akcela, Hethel Innovation, UEA's Enterprise Centre and the Norwich Research Park.

An economy that prioritises growth alongside health and wellbeing

We understand that economic growth is a symptom and cause of good health and wellbeing in a population. Our priorities are to reduce inequality and to invest in preventative measures (as outlined in our 'Promoting Independence Strategy' and 'Public Health Strategic Plan') that will ensure Norfolk's long-term health and

prosperity. With a forecasted rise in the demand for Health and Social Care services, partly caused by an ageing population, it is of paramount importance that we future proof the sector.

Our place

Norfolk boasts a diverse economy with specialisms. On the east coast, with sites such as the Great Yarmouth Operations and Maintenance Campus, South Denes and Beacon Park, there is a clean energy cluster. Wind farms and oil and gas rigs are located in the North Sea off the east coast. Bacton is home to a gas terminal and a potential hydrogen hub. The Sizewell Nuclear Power Station is located in the neighbouring county of Suffolk.

Shipping ports can be found in King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth and in Suffolk at Lowestoft and Southwold.

Norwich is home to a variety of important sites such as the Food Enterprise Park, International Airport, Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, University of East Anglia, Norwich Research Park, Norwich University of the Arts and City College Norwich as well as finance and insurance, digital and life science, advanced food tech and Biotech clusters.

Outside of Norwich, there are a variety of colleges such as the College of West Anglia, East Coast College, Paston College, Easton College and The Place in Great Yarmouth.

Innovation hub projects (via the Connected Innovation network) are found in King's Lynn, Hethel and Norwich.

Advanced manufacturing and engineering sites are located in Thetford and Snetterton.

There are enterprise or business parks in King's Lynn, Thetford, Snetterton, Scottow and Wells-next-the-Sea.

Marham is home to an RAF base.

Rail lines connect locations such as King's Lynn, Downham Market and Norwich to London. Cambridge and Ely are accessible by train from King's Lynn. Cambridge, Peterborough, Liverpool, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft are accessible by train from Norwich.

Our economy at a glance

- Gross Value Added (GVA) = £20billion
- Productivity per hour = £32.90 compared to the UK average of £37.70
- Norfolk's workplace median annual pay = £32,634 compared to the UK average of £35,100
- Business count = 39,760
- 2013-23 growth in business base = 14% compared to the UK average of 23%.
- Business 3-year survival rates = 63% compared to the UK average of 56% (based on 2019 births).

Key sectors

- Jobs in Agri-Food & Agri-Tech = 42,550
- Jobs in Life Sciences = 7,975
- Jobs in Financial Services = 11,978 and 20% of Norwich GVA.
- Jobs in Health and Social Care = 61,399
- Jobs in Manufacturing and Engineering = 47,582
- Jobs in Culture, Heritage and Visitor Economy = 61,842.

Key skills

33.1% of those aged 16-64 are educated to Level 4 or higher. The East of England average is 39.6% and the UK average is 43.2%.

7% of those aged 16-64 have no qualifications. The East of England average is 5.8% and the UK average is 6.4%.

Health inequality

Male life expectancy in Great Yarmouth is 75.1 years and 76.7 in King's Lynn. The average male life expectancy in Norfolk is 80 years.

Female life expectancy in Great Yarmouth is 81.2 years and 81 years in King's Lynn. The average female life expectancy in Norfolk is 83.8 years.

The total population of Norfolk is 931,900 which is a 6.8% increase since the 2011 census. 60% of people are aged 15-64 compared to the English average of 64%. 25% of people are aged 65 and over compared to the national average of 19%. £262,300 is the median house price. The UK median house price is £275,000.

Purpose and approach

Purpose

Norfolk, a £20 billion economy and home to 931,900 people, has many strengths which make it a brilliant place to live, work and learn.

From research prowess to an enviable natural environment and renowned heritage sites, Norfolk is home to a wealth of eclectic attractions. While possessing the modern and dynamic city of Norwich, Norfolk is also home to an array of market towns and rural villages which further enhances the county's distinctiveness.

Like other parts of the country, Norfolk also faces challenges. Accompanying national issues such as an uncertain economic and investment outlook, Norfolk has specific challenges, including deprivation, comparatively low productivity and skills shortages, which this strategy seeks to address. Now is also the right time to review our priorities with the new funding and powers at our disposal and the arrival of a new government. The Government's creation of a new Modern Industrial Strategy, that seeks to provide certainty and stability to facilitate investment and create growth, provides an important opportunity to review our Local Growth Plan. Our ambition is for Norfolk to become a national example of how to develop a new model for growth, that nurtures our key sectors while also supporting our people and places. Alongside partners, we are also committed to addressing and mitigating the impact of climate change.

Approach

To achieve our ambition and overcome our challenges, the strategy articulates how we will navigate short-term difficulties and uncertainties while demonstrating how we will adapt and invest to take advantage of our major opportunities.

The aim is not economic growth for its own sake or a narrow focus on GVA. We are aiming to invest in the actions and projects that will help our economy improve the quality of life for everyone who lives and works here. This includes helping businesses to innovate and grow and creating more and better paid opportunities for local residents.

The strategy has been co-developed with the engagement of over 500 stakeholders. This included businesses, voluntary groups, representative organisations and local councils.

A separate evidence pack is available that sets out more detailed data on our businesses, places and communities.

Major opportunities – barriers and priorities for action

Based on the evidence and the wider engagement with partners, we have agreed actions relating to the four major drivers of our economy: local business, people and skills, place making and communities and infrastructure.

These actions will enable Norfolk to capitalise on its major opportunities and assets while also addressing the challenges that it faces. There are a further three priorities that influence all our investment and actions – reducing inequality, decarbonisation and supporting our coastal and rural communities.

The actions and plans within this strategy have been informed by the most up to date data and analysis (both quantitative and qualitative) available.

Decarbonisation and sustainability, supporting rural and coastal economies and reducing inequalities are the strategy's cross cutting themes.

Opportunity 1

Successful clusters of future-focused sectors - clean energy, financial services and future food and agriculture, with strong research assets.

- **Longstanding barriers:** Obstacles to growth for many businesses: commercial space, recruitment, innovation skills.
- **Strategy pillar:** Local Business
- **Priorities for action in key sectors:**
 1. Support businesses in high-value clusters to grow, innovate and generate more local value.
 2. Ensure businesses in all places across Norfolk can succeed, prioritising growth in strategic sites and areas.
- **Priorities for action in supporting Norfolk's businesses:**
 1. Grow, strengthen and future proof our business base, targeting needs of SMEs.
 2. Support businesses to provide quality jobs, wages and conditions.

Opportunity 2

Well anchored firms, with high employment, resilient business base and a high quality of life.

- **Longstanding barriers:** Significant skills barriers, with lower qualification levels and issues accessing new skills opportunities.
- **Strategy pillar:** People and Skills
- **Priorities for action:**
 1. Build the workforce and talent of the future – both people entering work for the first time or coming back to work.
 2. Inspire and enable lifelong learning and workforce development.
 3. Equip and future proof our workforce to be able to take advantage of green and digital skills and opportunities.
 4. Supporting collaboration, leadership and efficient and accessible delivery in the skills system.

Opportunity 3

Growth corridors, major sites for employment space and housing investment.

- **Longstanding barriers:** Effects of long-term underinvestment in infrastructure.
- **Strategy pillar:** Infrastructure
- **Priorities for action:**
 1. Ensuring the enabling infrastructure is in place to support growth across Norfolk.
 2. Improving transport connectivity.
 3. Sustainable development, decarbonisation and climate change adaptation.

Opportunity 4

Vibrant communities, with a strong culture, heritage and visitor economy offer and high quality of life.

- **Longstanding barriers:** Health and wealth inequalities, with isolation compounding challenges for rural and coastal communities.
- **Strategy pillar:** Place Making and Communities
- **Priorities for action:**
 1. To support all places across Norfolk to provide a high quality of life.
 2. Strengthen communities, support resident wellbeing and increase pride of place.
 3. Promote Norfolk as a place to live, work, visit and invest.

Business: Key sectors, clusters and innovation

Emerging and high growth economies

Our goal is to support our specialist clusters and sectors to grow, strengthen our innovation ecosystem and drive the commercialisation of our globally significant research base.

We will also invest in creating the conditions for businesses in all sectors and of all types to grow and thrive, creating high-quality employment.

- **Life Sciences:** home to Norwich Research Park, and to a world-renowned centre of research excellence.
- **Clean Energy:** global leader in offshore wind, through the Norfolk offshore wind zone and more.
- **Agri-Tech & Agri-Food:** Major asset in agri-food and agri-tech, with major opportunities for innovation.
- **Financial Services & Insurance:** a thriving Fintech and insurance sector, with high productivity and growth.
- **Digital Tech:** home to diverse cluster of tech firms, with significant opportunities locally.
- **Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering:** home to Norwich Research Park, and a world-renowned centre of research excellence.

The foundational economy

As well as high growth and emerging sectors, it is important we also look at the foundational economy in Norfolk, which provides a high number of jobs, contributes to GVA and supports Norfolk's residents. If we do not protect and sustain our foundational economy, then it becomes much harder to connect residents to opportunities in high-growth areas and grow our economy.

- **Culture, Heritage & Visitor Economy:** wealth of attractions in Norwich, coastal locations with a thriving visitor economy.
- **Construction:** regional specialism in the east of England, opportunities for skills development in green construction.
- **Health and Social Care:** with over 500 care providers, helping people to start life well, live well and age well.

Priorities for key sectors

Priority 1

Support businesses in high-value clusters to grow, innovate and generate more local value.

Norfolk has major and growing clusters of firms in every district. It has a wealth of future-focused sectors, including a globally leading clean energy cluster, financial services, agri-tech and agri-food, advanced manufacturing and engineering, growing digital services and a thriving culture, heritage and visitor economy sector.

We need to do more to harness our strengths so that more businesses and residents benefit and have set out a series of actions to do so.

- **Develop local clusters and remove barriers to growth**

We will support the development of key infrastructure to aid the transition to Net Zero, including the Great Yarmouth Operations & Maintenance Campus, and the Hydrogen Hub in North Norfolk. We will also build on the impressive talent pipeline from accredited courses at the Norwich University of Arts, and continue developing the spaces for digital start-ups, such as the Digital Hub in Norwich.

- **Strengthen local supply chains**

We will continue to support the development of local supply chains, by building on the Norfolk Local Economy Partnership (LVEP), developing the Food Enterprise Park (FEP) and work with the Agri-Food Industry Council. We will continue to invest into agri-food decarbonisation and maximise the supply chain benefits from regional clean energy projects.

- **Strengthen innovation ecosystems**

Alongside the Norfolk and Suffolk Innovation Board and the Connected Innovation network, we will deliver and build the Innovate UK Action Plan, building on the existing work in developing a fully connected rural and urban innovation cluster. We will also continue to build on the UK High Potential Opportunity for Norfolk's Agri-Biotech and Life Sciences sector and sustain business support programmes like the Innovation Grant mentoring project.

Priority 2

Ensure businesses in all places across Norfolk can succeed, prioritising growth in strategic sites and areas.

Major growth opportunities exist, especially in our specialisms: agri-tech, renewable energy, digital and FinTech clusters in Greater Norwich, advanced manufacturing

and engineering and life sciences in the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor and along the A10 corridor, and clean energy and Net Zero along Norfolk's Energy coast. We will adopt an integrated approach to infrastructure, accounting for key travel to work areas and places defined by the flows of labour, goods and services. To support these, we will deliver on the following actions:

- **Deliver the right types and mix of commercial space where it is needed, supporting cluster growth in business parks, enterprise zones and research centres.**

Supporting projects like East Norwich, the new roundabout at Hethel, and King's Lynn Enterprise Park, whilst enabling the development of key industries (such as clean energy) through the development of The Beacon Park and South Denes Enterprise Zone, to act as hubs for the offshore energy sector. Promoting biodiversity through projects like Wendling Beck, to create habitats and support nature-driven processes on a large scale.

- **Support the health and social care sector to become more resilient and help to address health inequalities that exist within our county.**

Investing in preventative measures to help bridge gaps in equality, whilst supporting the improvement of the quality-of-care jobs and promoting the collaboration between economic development teams and the public health industry. Initiatives like the Mind Hub in Dereham will enable services to deliver preventative mental health interventions, providing greater social value to health and social care in Norfolk.

Supporting Norfolk's businesses

Our businesses and the people who work in them are the engine of our economy. Their skills, energy and success will enable Norfolk to transition to a lower carbon and more inclusive economy. So that businesses of all sizes can succeed, we need to ensure that we have the right business support available.

By providing the right support, we can help create **high growth businesses** by supporting entrepreneurialism and innovation is essential to boosting productivity and wages.

Building on the success of the **New Anglia Growth Hub** (our 'front door' for business support) is essential to our aspiration of continuing to meet the needs of businesses of all kinds. Complementing this is an array of specialist support programmes offered by partners which target high-growth and innovative businesses.

- 63% of business survival after 3 years compared to the English average of 56%.
- 99.7% of businesses in Norfolk are SMEs.
- 88% of businesses in Norfolk are micro businesses.
- £32.90 productivity levels GVA per hour compared to £37.70 for the UK.
- £588 average gross weekly wages compared to the English average of £645.

Priority 1

Grow, strengthen and future-proof our business base, targeting needs of SMEs.

We want to encourage an enterprising culture in Norfolk and support residents to start-up their own business, and for new start-ups to survive and thrive. We will need to:

- Continue and enhance the support provided by the Growth Hub. As the Growth Hub is our county-wide front door to all business support services, enhancements will help to simplify the landscape for business support. A new mobile app will be developed which will contain the latest information relating to business support.
- Provide SME support for digital transformation, to help understand which digital tools should be adopted to improve services and levels of productivity.
- Provide start-up support for businesses, social organisations and CICs to build on the work of organisations like MENTA and Hethel Innovation.
- Nurture Norfolk's scale-ups through the right mix of support to scale and develop high-growth opportunities.
- Support businesses to embed the Net Zero transition through peer-to-peer learning and bespoke support.
- Support access to finance for SMEs to enable growth, R&D or diversification into new services.
- Provide innovation support for SMEs to address productivity challenges.
- Support overseas trade opportunities by working with the Department for Business and Trade and the Norfolk Chambers of Commerce.

Priority 2

Support businesses to provide quality jobs, wages and conditions.

We are determined to achieve a thriving, growing economy that provides better jobs, wages and conditions. We will need to:

- Promote and support good employment practices via a Norfolk Employment Charter.
- Encourage organisations to adopt the living wage so that Norfolk can aspire to be a living-wage county by 2035.
- Support to extension of the culture, heritage and visitor economy season and provide better jobs in the sector.
- Work with partners (eg Market Towns groups) to promote the shoulder seasons and promote events such as 'Fire on the Water' in Great Yarmouth.
- Supporting the improvement of the quality of jobs in the health and social care sector.
- Create more sector specific co-working spaces to enable knowledge transfer and the expansion of networks.
- We will use the opportunity afforded by the Procurement Act 2023 to engage SMEs and social enterprises in the bidding for contracts. This will support local supply chains and retain value in the Norfolk economy.

People and skills

Norfolk residents are our future. We want to ensure that future economic growth directly benefits all our residents. This will help to reduce health inequalities and improve wages. To do this, we will support all our communities and age groups to gain the skills they need. We will also support access to employment across all sectors.

Priority 1

Build the workforce and talent of the future:

- **Develop the future workforce** through programmes such as Boost, with relevant transferable and work-ready skills. Improving productivity and opportunity for residents by addressing skills gaps for employers through the Adult Skills Budget.
- **Support for employers seeking to hire new talent in high-quality jobs**, through bursary schemes for re-skilling and the delivery of the Norfolk County Council Apprenticeships Norfolk strategy.
- **Develop new approaches to support health and wellbeing in relation to work**, by supporting preventative action, as outlined in our Promoting Independence strategy.
- **Raise awareness and aspirations of local careers, developing new pathways into local sectors, including apprenticeships, in partnership with our major employers.** A key aspect of this is continuing to engage all educational organisations to raise aspirations.

Priority 2

Inspire and enable lifelong learning and workforce development:

- **Upskill the workforce to grow the economy, drive productivity and increase earnings.** By working with Higher Education (University of East Anglia and College of West Anglia's School of Nursing), we will build a pipeline of skilled workers.
- **Support residents from vulnerable groups and those facing other barriers to work to gain or retain employment:** for example, by ensuring that employability support programmes address health and wellbeing.
- **Adapting services and places to support our ageing population, while enabling ageing workers to mentor others and contribute.**

Priority 3

Equip and future proof our workforce to be able to take advantage of green and digital skills and opportunities:

- **Increase digital automation and STEM related skills and the use of technology**, by encouraging local businesses to adopt new technology and develop their digital skills through initiatives like Go Digital.
- To support the transition to Net Zero, **develop awareness of the green skills opportunities** and increase local provision to respond, through the Net Zero academy or the Green Skills network.

Priority 4

Support collaboration, leadership and efficient and accessible delivery in the skills system:

- **Drive industry engagement in provision and delivery**, including in supporting the out of work and low qualified into the labour market, through programmes such as Universal Sport and Skills Bootcamp.
- Further develop flexible and responsive training methods; support for the continuing development of local skills assembly's and forums in collaboration with Norfolk districts, boroughs and city; and retain and attract skilled graduates by creating and increasing the number of graduate roles.

Infrastructure

Our infrastructure provides the connections, protection and utilities that enable Norfolk's people and businesses to succeed and thrive. The infrastructure we need has evolved over the last 20 years and will continue to do so.

Priority 1

Ensure the enabling infrastructure is in place to support growth across Norfolk.

Housing

Housing affordability and availability affects Norfolk's urban and rural communities in different ways, whilst energy efficiency of our older housing stock is a major issue. With demand for housing increasing, we will work with district councils to deliver over 4,023 new homes per year across the county, as set out in their Local Plans. We will also tap into opportunities to unlock development sites to meet our housing needs.

Power

Although Norfolk is a leader in clean energy production due to the Clean Energy Coast, local businesses and people are not yet receiving the benefits associated with this. Our power shortfall will need to be addressed to enable Norfolk to deliver on its economic potential.

We will support increases in the number, quality and scale of local energy generation and storage projects. The Resilient Whole System Energy Plan for Norfolk will work with our communities to understand the role they can play in supporting and benefiting from sustainable clean energy production in the county.

Water

Norfolk is one of the driest counties in the UK and the increasing effects of climate change will continue to impact future water supply.

We will work together to deliver the Water Resources East Regional Plan and the Anglia Water Resources Management Plan 2024. These plans set out how a sustainable and secure supply of clean drinking water will be provided over a minimum 25-year planning period.

Community facilities, public realm and green infrastructure

Norfolk hosts a range of community infrastructure and a wealth of Green Infrastructure assets. We need to continue enhancing residents' sense of pride in

their local communities, and ensure the right infrastructure is built to support the sustainable delivery of new homes.

We will work with partners to provide community spaces which offer shared facilities, such as the Multi-user Community Hub in King's Lynn. We will enhance the public realm through wider regeneration projects, such as East Norwich and King's Lynn Southgates Masterplan. We will also support businesses to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain and encourage new publicly accessible green spaces.

Digital

Notwithstanding the rural nature of the county, broadband availability is good with superfast levels of coverage at 97%. However, there is room for improvement. In addition to some cold spots, we currently lag behind national averages for ultrafast broadband coverage (69% against the national average of 86%).

To address this, we will deliver central government investment of £128m across Norfolk, to improve Gigabit fibre broadband across the county.

Priority 2

Improve transport connectivity.

Based on the Department for Transport's journey time statistics, we can see that average journey times to large employment centres (5000 or more jobs) are substantially longer in parts of the north and west of the county. Shorter journey times are evident in Norwich. Actions to improve transport connectivity include:

- Using the detailed actions set out in documents such as the Norfolk Local Transport Plan, **we will continue to improve the network for all modes of transport, connecting residents to jobs and services**, and improving network functionality, infrastructure and safety. We will build on recent successes such as the arrival of 70 electric buses in Norwich in March 2024, representing an investment of around £37.2m.
- **We will prioritise the delivery and development of major transport projects**, such as the A140 Long Stratton Bypass, and align with the priorities within the Norfolk Electric Vehicle Strategy.

Climate change and protecting our environment

Objectives

We have three main objectives:

- Decarbonise the economy and seize the economic benefits of the emerging green economy.
- Build resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- Ensure that future development is sustainable and protects and enhances our natural environment.

Actions

To meet our objectives, we will:

- Deliver our key strategies – the Norfolk Climate Strategy, Local Nature Recovery Strategy and the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- Ensure communities and infrastructure are safe through the Norfolk Flood Alliance.
- Support agriculture to decarbonise, by providing tailored business support for SMEs, investigating if digital twinning could be used to test the viability of different interventions and leveraging the County Farms estate.

Our world-leading research, strengths in food and Agri-Tech, position as the UK's largest clean energy provider and wide-ranging green technology and environmental businesses makes Norfolk integral to the UK's transition to a lower carbon economy and its adaptation to climate change.

We will use our skills and expertise to better Norfolk's environment and adapt to climate change and in the process create new high-quality jobs, opportunities and assets for Norfolk's communities.

Opportunities and challenges

To ensure our continued success, we need to secure investment into the Norwich Research Park, increase commercialisation of research and innovation, support businesses to adapt, learn from world-class examples, invest in local energy networks and new public transport, cultivate local partnerships and develop new skills and provision.

Alongside these, we have certain challenges which need to be overcome to ensure Norfolk's success in combating climate change. Climate change is already affecting our communities and infrastructure, and historic emissions will continue to affect our climate regardless of the preventative measures that we now take. We need to continue connecting transportation in Norfolk, as transport represents nearly a quarter of Norfolk's carbon footprint. We will also work with the Norfolk Net Zero Communities Project, to understand the non-technical barriers to widespread community decarbonisation and co-design solutions to them.

Our ambitious Climate Change Strategy provides a strategic framework for tackling climate change locally and building resilience to its effects. It outlines how we aim to meet our commitment to reach net zero across our estate by 2030, will collaborate with our partners to reach a carbon neutral Norfolk, address important issues such as the decline in biodiversity and equip Norfolk with the skills to harness the opportunities of the green economy.

Our places and communities

With the Broads, over 100 miles of coastline, rural landscapes, market towns and heritage sites, Norfolk has some of the most significant places in the United Kingdom. Our communities also have a strong sense of pride of place, distinctiveness and local identity.

Inclusive growth

Norfolk has disparities in the outcomes and opportunities experienced by residents. This is an opportunity to refresh our approach to linking communities to jobs and skills through locally accessible infrastructure, growing social capital and tackling environmental and social drivers of deprivation. By taking advantage of this opportunity, we will achieve more inclusive growth.

Priority 1

To support all places across Norfolk to provide a high quality of life:

- **Support rural and coastal communities**, by regenerating key local assets and improving access to services.
- **Supporting attractive and resilient market towns and high streets**, by delivering cultural and heritage programmes, such as St George's Guildhall, and structural funding programmes, such as the Towns Fund in King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth and Thetford.

Priority 2

Strengthen communities, support resident wellbeing and increase pride of place:

- **Reducing inequalities and addressing concentrated pockets of deprivation**, by investing in place-based programmes that target deprivation and improve access to youth facilities and services to support the wellbeing of young people. We will also invest in Norfolk's places in a way that promotes health and wellbeing.
- **Supporting VCSE organisations to have greater impact** by providing them with long-term funding streams that enable them to have the greatest impact and encouraging an increase in volunteering.

Priority 3

Promote Norfolk as a place to live, work, visit and invest:

- **We will enhance and promote Norfolk's reputation**, by supporting innovative partnerships that encourage investment, such as GENERATE and East Wind, and ensures that local people benefit from growth.
- **Promoting the cultural sector, creative enterprises and cultural experiences**, through priorities developed in strategies like the King's Lynn Cultural & Heritage Strategy which enhance quality of life.
- **We will support interventions that improve access and public understanding of Norfolk's key sectors**, such as visitor centres and public programmes around economic infrastructure for life sciences, clean energy and Agri-Food.

Spatial growth areas

Our larger towns, such as King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth, and city are centres of business growth that also anchor wider growth corridors. They link together natural assets, major housing and employment sites, significant travel to work areas and access to wider markets. Examples include the A47 route to the Midlands, and the connection of the A10 corridor to London.

- **Greater Norwich**
Norwich is a dynamic University and Cathedral city with a growing data science cluster, Fin-Tech start-ups, well developed research and innovation ecosystems and rich cultural and arts attractions.
- **Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor**
The Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor represents dynamic and growing

sectors which have significant linkages and interdependencies. They also benefit from considerable local supply chains and talent pipelines.

- **King's Lynn and Cambridge Corridor**

King's Lynn and West Norfolk has significant potential and economic opportunity, bolstered by its historic assets, proximity to the coast and countryside combined with its strategic location and connectivity to the Midlands, Cambridge and the rest of the corridor via Ely.

- **Rural and coastal areas, and market towns**

Norfolk's rural and coastal areas are central to the county's identity, economic profile and play a leading role in the county's tourism offer. The strategy highlights our commitment to regeneration in our market towns.

- **A47 Growth Corridor**

We will focus on our strategic business growth locations. The A47 Growth Corridor offers strategic connections between businesses and sectors across the main urban centres of Norfolk.

- **Great Yarmouth – the Clean Energy Coast**

Great Yarmouth and its coast are central to a globally competitive clean energy and renewables supply chain which has huge potential for growth. It is also home to an established maritime cluster that is also seeing strong future growth potential.

Our commitment

Working with partners

Norfolk partners have come together to agree a clear set of priorities and actions that reflect the opportunities and challenges we face. Over 500 organisations have been involved in developing this plan. All were committed to working together, the need to ensure that our economy becomes more inclusive and that we protect and enhance Norfolk's environment.

We will work constructively with the government and engage meaningfully with their agenda, which includes the Modern Industrial Strategy, so that Norfolk's businesses, people and places can thrive. We are also determined to play our role in helping to deliver national economic growth.

Internationally, focusing on our sector specialisms, we select and develop partnerships to drive inward investment leads, trade opportunities and growth within our internationally linked businesses. Establishing partnerships through Memorandums of Understandings, we currently engage with the Dutch province of Drenthe, Ukrainian region of Lviv and the Virginia Beach city in the USA. These partnerships focus activity around our key sectors into projects that provide mutual benefit, generating leads for investment, growth and trade. We can create the future economy we want to if we build on our strong history of working together. We have a good track record, with recent successes in securing investment in transport and major funding for town centre regeneration.

Delivering together

The actions in this plan will be delivered by many different partners. Local Authorities, businesses, universities, colleges and other education providers, VCSE organisations, sector groups and business support organisations. We will also deliver through existing partnerships and structures, including:

- The Greater Norwich Local Plan and the Greater Norwich Growth Board
- Local Authority local plans and economic strategies
- The King's Lynn Town Board, Great Yarmouth Town Board and Norwich Town Board
- Norwich City Vision Board
- Future Breckland Board
- The Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor

- Our Industry Councils and sector groups:
 - **Energy:** GENERATE, EEEGR (East of England Energy Group) and East Wind
 - **Digital:** Council for Digital Tech and Tech East
 - **Agri-Food and Agri-Tech:** Agri-Food Industry Council, Agri-TechE
 - **Financial Services:** FIG (Finance Industry Group) Norwich
 - **Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering:** NAAME Board
 - **Construction:** Building Growth Skills Network (BGSN)
 - **Space:** Space East
 - **Tourism:** Cultural Board, Visit East of England
- Innovation Board
- Norfolk Climate Change Partnership
- Norfolk Investment Board
- Norfolk Employment & Skills Board
- Norfolk Business Board
- Norfolk Jobcentre Plus and county-wide skills providers
- Government departments and agencies
- Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care Board.

Funding and financing

Funding for the actions in this strategy will come from a range of sources, including Local Authorities, private sector investors, businesses and central government. Underpinning our efforts to source external funding will be the work of our External Funding Team. We will continue to advocate for devolved powers and funding from government, to accelerate economic development in Norfolk and support implementation of our strategy.

This is a long-term plan and an important priority will be to secure the additional investment needed where it is not already in place.