



DRAFT v12



Local Growth Plan

Norfolk Economic Strategy
2024-2029



Contents

Foreword	4
Vision	6
Our place	8
Our economy at a glance	10
Purpose and approach	12
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Business: Key sectors, clusters & innovation	16
Business support	48
People and skills	62
Infrastructure	74
Climate change	86
Place making and communities	94
<hr/>	
Our Commitment	112

FOREWORD



Lotus Cars, Hethel



Herring Bridge, Great Yarmouth



City College, Norwich



Bakeaholics, Attleborough

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 & 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 and lacks key infrastructure for housing and business growth.

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 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 national Industrial Strategy. It closely aligns to the Government's Five Missions in shaping our ambitions,

including Norfolk's key role in making the UK a 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 a 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.



CLLR KAY MASON BILLIG
Leader of Norfolk County Council



NICK STEVEN-JONES
Chair of Norfolk Business Board



CLLR CARL SMITH
Chair of Norfolk Leaders Group

VISION

We want Norfolk to be...



Cromer

A MORE INCLUSIVE, HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY ECONOMY

With partners working together to improve the quality of work, remove barriers and enable an enterprising culture, helping people of all ages into work. We want to grow overall levels of private and public investment to actively tackle the health and economic inequalities that exist within Norfolk, driving growth by unlocking the potential of residents and communities that are currently held back.



UK LEADER IN CLEAN ENERGY PRODUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Supporting the UK's transition to Net Zero and with energy generated here being used to support our local transition. We want to protect our amazing natural environment, improving bio-diversity and investing in natural capital. We will also lobby for access to power that currently bypasses Norfolk, via the grid, benefitting local communities and businesses.



A EUROPEAN LEADER IN FINANCIAL SERVICES

Norwich has one of the UK's largest general insurance sectors outside London, which generates approximately £1.6bn (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. FinTech cluster has potential to grow to 50 to 70 FinTech firms by 2027.



A MAJOR GROWTH LOCATION 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.



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

With the Norwich Research Park (the largest single-site concentration of research in food, health and life sciences in Europe, fostering a unique mix of world-leading research) to the engineering expertise at Lotus and Hethel, Norfolk is home to pioneering activity. Further growth is planned to establish a technology hub in the region with the potential to create in excess of 500 further jobs by 2026, leveraging £500m of investment and safeguarding the area as a centre for sports car operations.



A MAJOR CLUSTER FOR THE UK'S AGRI-FOOD/ AGRI-TECH SECTOR, WITH A FLOURISHING SUPPLY CHAIN OF LOCAL FIRMS

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.



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 per cent 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.



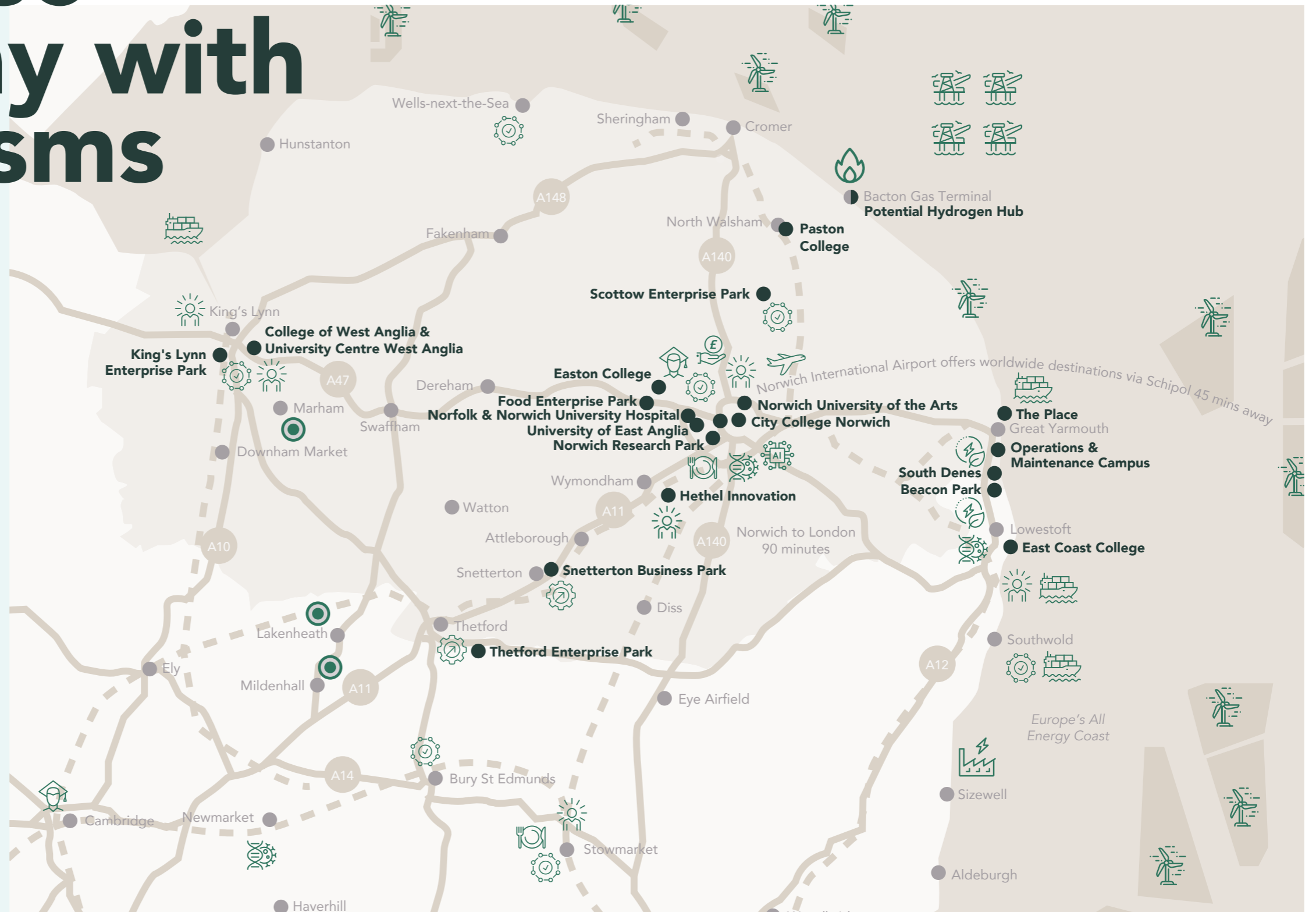
AN ECONOMY THAT PRIORITISES GROWTH ALONGSIDE HEALTH AND WELLBEING

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.

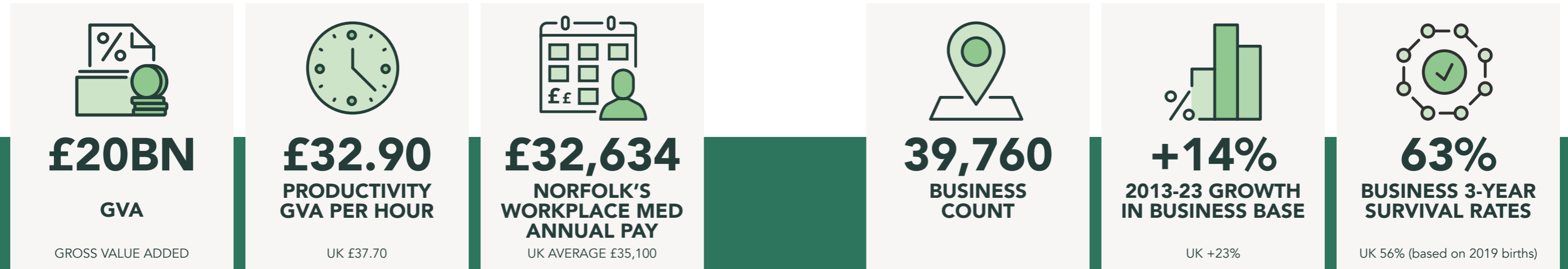


A diverse economy with specialisms

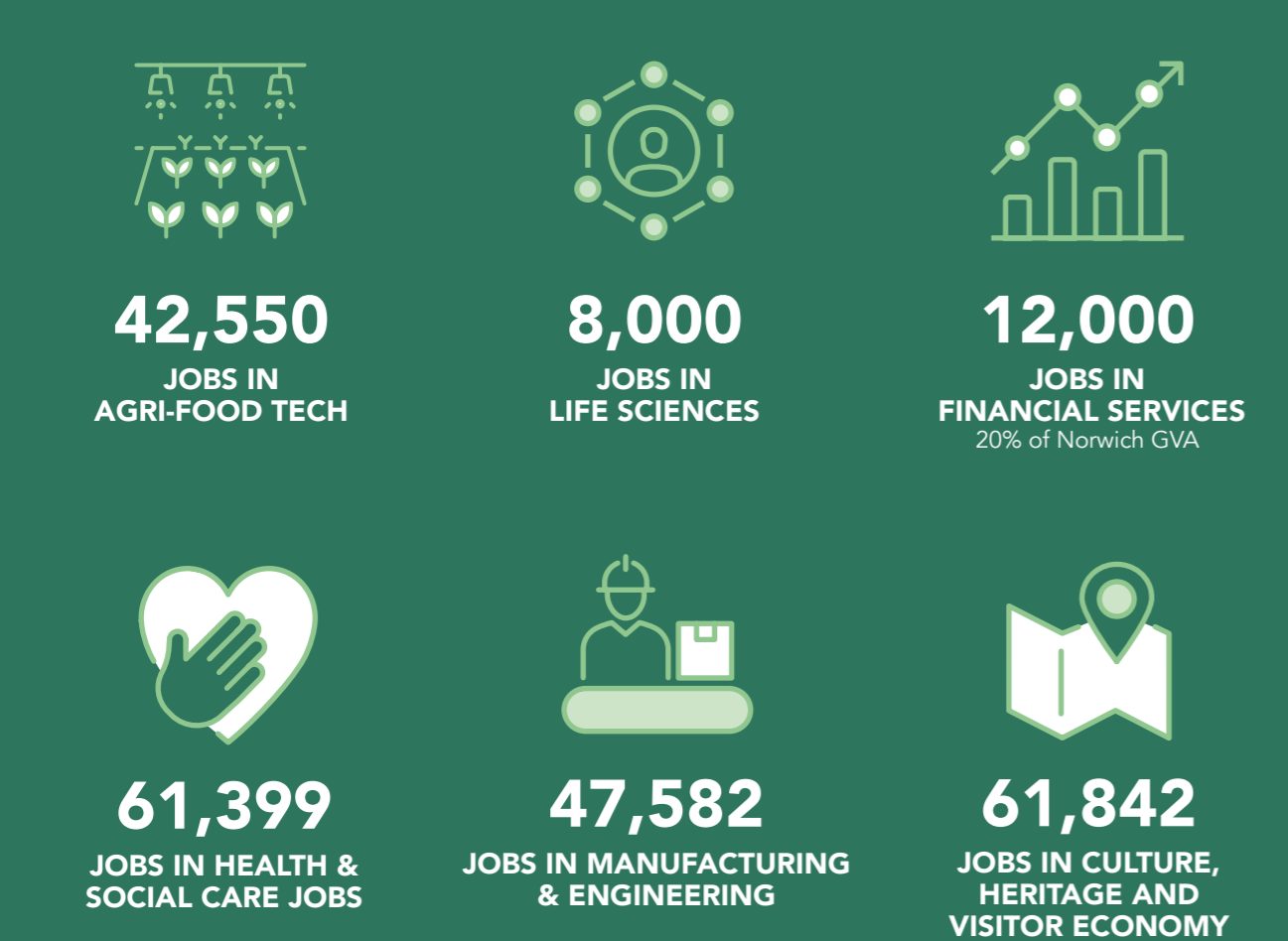
-  Clean Energy Cluster
-  Finance & Insurance Cluster
-  Digital Cluster
-  Life Science, Advanced Food Tech & Biotech Cluster
-  Food Enterprise Zone
-  Innovation Hub Projects (via Connected Innovation network)
-  Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering
-  University
-  Enterprise Zone
-  Oil & Gas Rig
-  Wind Farm
-  Gas Terminal
-  Nuclear Power Station
-  Airport
-  Shipping Port
-  RAF Base
-  Rail



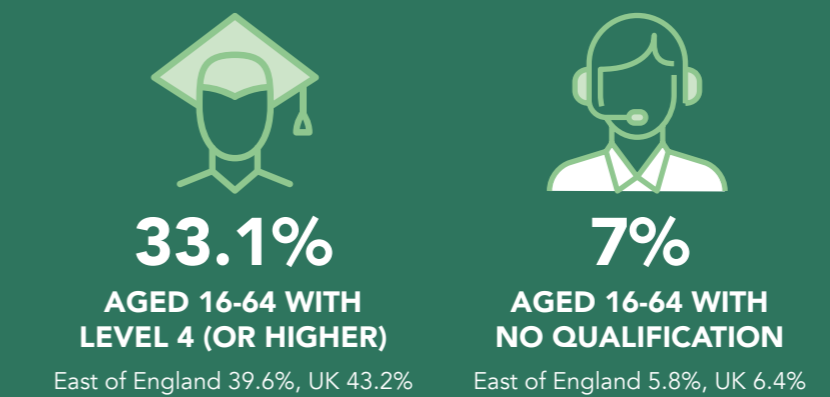
OUR ECONOMY AT A GLANCE



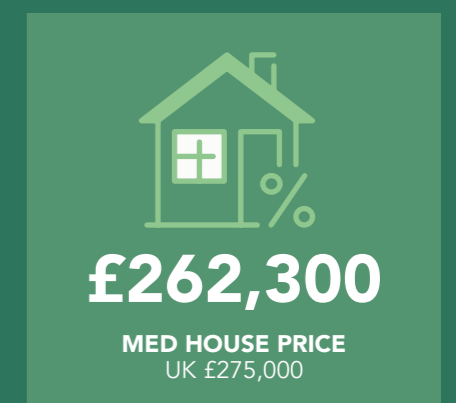
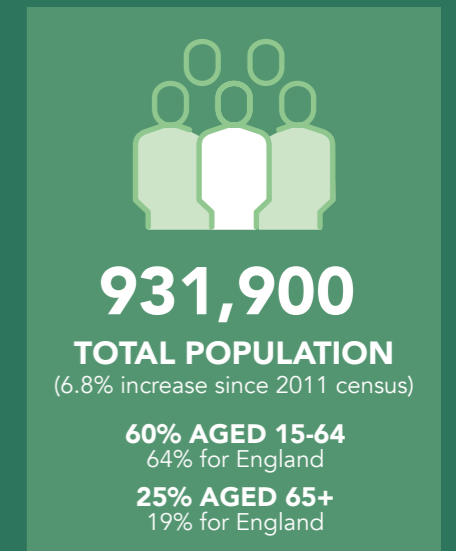
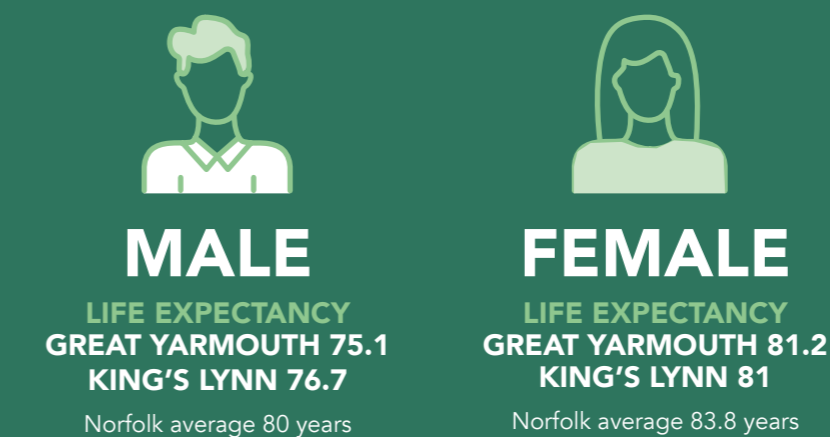
KEY SECTORS —



KEY SKILLS —



HEALTH INEQUALITY —





Purpose

Norfolk is a £20bn economy and home to 931,900 people. It is a historic county that plays a vital role in the UK's future and is a brilliant place to live, work and learn.

We have globally important research strengths. Employment and levels of trade are both higher than the East of England average. With the Broads National Park, Norfolk Coast National Landscape and miles of coastline and countryside, we have an enviable natural environment. Norwich, a fast-growing city with two universities, combines its rich cultural, social and architectural heritage with a dynamic, modern and creative business base which is accompanied by world class education and research centres. King's Lynn plays an anchor role as a major employment and education centre for the west of the county. Market towns including Thetford, Dereham, North Walsham, Downham Market, Attleborough and Diss are important centres of innovation, employment and culture. These and smaller market towns and villages help give the county its distinct character. On the coast, Great Yarmouth is at the

forefront of both social and physical regeneration and the UK's offshore energy sector.

There is still work to do though. Earnings and skills levels in Norfolk are lower than in the country as a whole. We also have communities, both rural and urban, facing barriers to employment and experiencing health inequalities.

Norfolk's communities and businesses have proved resilient in the face of recent economic pressures, sustaining relatively high levels of employment and a high quality of life. But the cumulative pressures of increasing costs and uncertainty in the wider economic and investment outlook have created real difficulties for local people. This has exacerbated long term inequalities within Norfolk in wages, healthy life expectancy and businesses ability to grow and succeed. Overall, our economic growth rate and productivity has remained below that of the UK. This increases pressure on wages, limits business' ability to invest and reduces opportunities for our communities.

Now is the right time to review our priorities, ensure that we are taking appropriate local actions (across public and private spheres) and seek

the government investment that we need. We also have new funding and powers to deploy, including the integration of the Local Enterprise Partnership into the County Council. The Government's creation of a new Industrial Strategy means that now is the right time to review our Local Growth Plan. This will underpin how Norfolk can target local needs and priorities whilst aligning with government strategy. The document will provide a strong platform for engagement with government around a devolved approach to investing in places and growth.

Our ambition is for Norfolk to become a national example of how to develop a new model for growth, that builds on the important work of the former Local Enterprise Partnership, in supporting and developing our key sectors and maintaining a powerful business voice. Combined with a wider focus on place, skills and regeneration, we can take an integrated approach, driving new investment in businesses and communities. Norfolk partners are committed to addressing and mitigating the impact of climate change, led by the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership.

Norfolk is a £20bn economy and home to 931,900 people.



Norwich

PURPOSE AND APPROACH

Approach

This strategy sets out how we will both navigate short-term challenges and uncertainty, whilst adapting and investing in the major opportunities that we have.

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, helping businesses innovate and grow; creating more and better paid opportunities for local residents.

This strategy has been co-developed by a wide partnership of different

firms, voluntary groups, representative organisations and local councils who share pride and ambition for our county and its unique assets and opportunities.

Based on the evidence and wide engagement with partners, we have agreed actions against the four major drivers of our economy: local businesses, people and skills, places and communities and infrastructure. We have set out actions for each that will enable Norfolk to use the major opportunities and assets we have to tackle the long-term challenges that we face. We also agreed that there were three priorities that should influence all our investment and actions in relation to the economy – reducing inequality, decarbonisation and supporting our coastal and rural communities. Actions to tackle each of

these are integrated into this plan, rather than being identified separately.

BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE

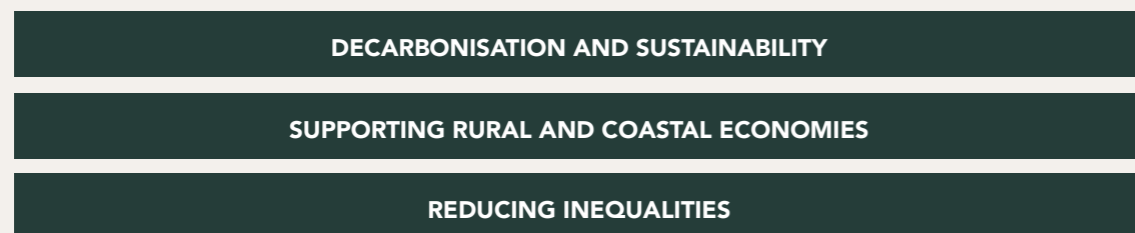
We have developed the priorities and actions in this plan using the most up to date data and analysis available, together with the experience and knowledge of over 400 partners. Combining quantitative and qualitative evidence in this way ensures that the actions we are taking are both based on sound analysis of our strengths and the challenges we face and are also right for the businesses and people of Norfolk.

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

Themes of the economic strategy



Cross-cutting themes:



Major opportunities — barriers and priorities for action

MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES

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

LONG STANDING BARRIERS

Obstacles to growth for many businesses: commercial space, recruitment, innovation skills

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

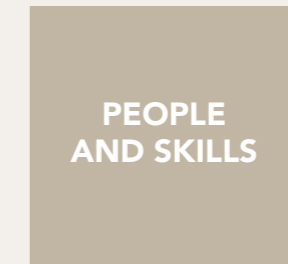


- Cluster support programme
- Supply chain support
- Strengthen the innovation ecosystem
- New commercial spaces

DECARBONISATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

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

Significant skills barriers, with **lower qualification levels** and issues accessing new skills opportunities



- Develop the talent pool
- Support lifelong / workplace learning
- Strengthen digital and green economy skills
- Improve the skills system

SUPPORTING RURAL AND COASTAL ECONOMIES

Growth corridors, major sites for employment space and housing investment

Effects of long **term under-investment** in infrastructure



- Transport projects A11, A10, A47,
- Norfolk Energy Plan, Water Strategy,
- Energy infrastructure
- Housing sites and enabling inf
- Active travel
- Improved bus services

REDUCING INEQUALITIES

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

Health and wealth inequalities, with isolation compounding challenges for rural and coastal communities



- Town centre renewal and re-purposing
- Promoting Norfolk's offer destinations
- Festival programme
- Local VCSE support
- Capitalising on our offer for remote and flexible working
- Encourage 'Meanwhile Use' programmes

Business: Key Sectors, Clusters & Innovation



The emerging economy

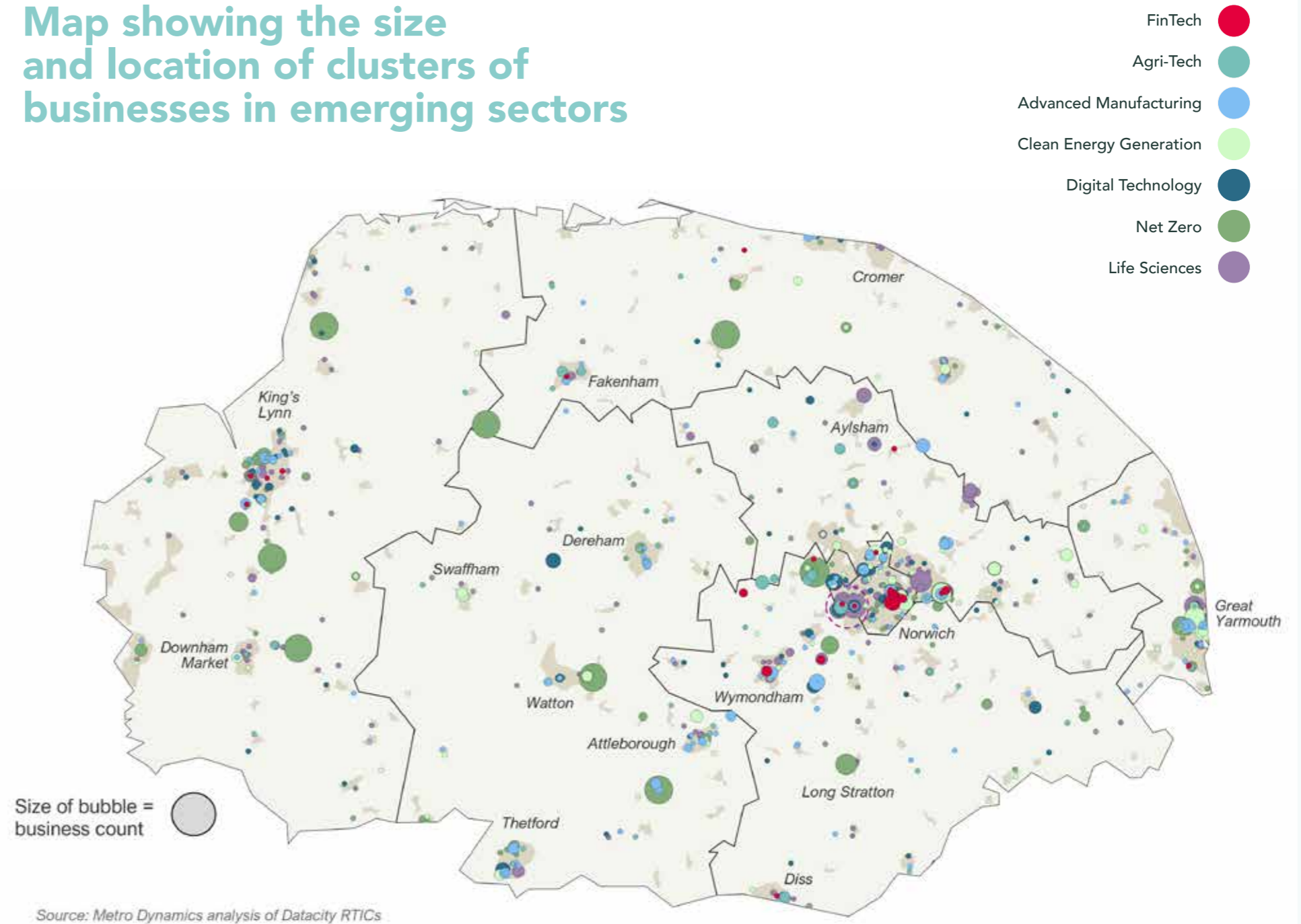
Our goal is to support our specialist clusters and sectors to grow, strengthen our innovation ecosystem and drive the commercialisation of our globally significant research base.

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. We want to develop strategic sites for increased employment and industrial space to meet business demand. We will support local supply chains in all our major sectors, including in helping to grow local firms to take advantage of major projects in energy infrastructure.

Emerging & High Growth Sectors

SECTOR	WORKFORCE	GVA PER HEAD (NORFOLK)
Clean Energy	3,611	£153.9K
Agri-Food/ Agri-Tech	42,550	£35K
Life Sciences	8,000	£43.9K
Digital Tech	9,000	£51.2K
Financial Services	11,978	£136.8K
Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering	47,582	£42K

Map showing the size and location of clusters of businesses in emerging sectors



Caister-on-Sea

Key sectors



Clean Energy

Norfolk is a global leader for offshore wind with £39bn of clean energy investment forecasted over the next 20 years. The Southern North Sea offshore wind market is poised to increase significantly in both pace and scale to meet expectations around Net Zero.

The Norfolk Offshore Wind Zone will produce clean power for over four million homes across the UK. Norfolk's energy sector has a GVA per head of £153.9k, which is the highest of all sectors and will help us to raise average wage levels in Norfolk.

WORLD'S BIGGEST

With some of the world's biggest wind farms and a major Operations and Maintenance Campus, Great Yarmouth generates over £1.8bn GV. Bacton Gas Terminal in North Norfolk manages around 30% of UK gas supplies and offers significant opportunities to deliver carbon capture, utilisation and storage.

There are also promising opportunities within our region to look at hydrogen and other next-generation fuels. We can take advantage of these market opportunities, so that our economy can benefit from and participate in the decarbonisation journey. Additionally, work is underway to develop Sizewell C which provides major supply chain opportunities for Norfolk businesses.

Our business community can realise these opportunities and meet the current needs of the region and beyond. The challenge of a changing environment means our business community needs to address these demands, to help meet the Clean Power target by 2030 and the transition to Net Zero target by 2050.

INVESTMENT

Major investment is ongoing, and we are working with regional partners from Suffolk and Essex under the GENERATE brand to drive inward investment across the energy sector.

Our challenge is to ensure that local people in severely deprived communities benefit from jobs and new skills, so that we can maintain a lasting legacy for our local economy from these key nationally significant infrastructure projects.

Agri-Tech & Agri Food

Norfolk's Agri-Food and Agri-Tech cluster is a major asset in both expertise and scale. We are central to the nation's challenges around food security and climate change, home to globally leading research and innovation at Norwich Research Park (NRP) that is supporting Agri-Tech, agri-biotech and food tech, as recognised by the £7.5m Innovate UK Launchpad.

The University of East Anglia is ranked number one in the country for its research impact in these areas. The wider NRP is home to the largest concentration of Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) funded sites which specialise in food security, plant science and nutrition. Other centres of expertise include the Food Enterprise Park (home to Condimentum, Fischer Farms and the Broadland Food Innovation Centre), Easton College (with state-of-the art facilities supporting land-based studies), and the Royal Norfolk Showground.

EXPERTISE

We have a wealth of expertise across the agricultural sector with farms of all sizes, major estates and localised clusters playing a major role in biodiversity net gain, innovation, diversification, food security and job creation. Our food manufacturing and processing companies are highly innovative, at the forefront of new

nutritional food products. For example, in King's Lynn, major food processing companies such as Mars, Greenyard, and Tulip offer their expertise to support the food processing industry. This is all backed up by major supply chains from key ports in the region (King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth) and logistics.

FARMING

A thriving farming industry is critical to the wider Agri-Tech and Agri-Food sector. This industry faces a vast number of challenges including climate change, downwards pressures on food prices, a complex and bureaucratic funding landscape and the challenge to decarbonise.

Global demands and government priorities seek to increase yields, whilst ensuring higher environmental standards. This poses a problem for the farming community, which experiences challenges in food production, increased desire to protect waterways, air and soil - all whilst retaining sufficient yields. We will work with partners and the government to highlight the pressures experienced by farmers, and to fill the gap between what we demand of farmers, and what they can supply.

THE FUTURE

NRP is working to secure a safer, healthier and more sustainable future through the power of plant and microbial science. This is detailed in the HP3 vision – Healthy Plants, Healthy People, Healthy Planet - to be delivered in partnership between UKRI's (United Kingdom Research and Innovation) BBSRC, the John Innes Centre and The Sainsbury Laboratory. NRP is also home to the Biofortification Hub funded by

BBSRC as part of the Open Innovation Research Club on diet and health.

REGIONAL COLLABORATION

We are working in partnership with Innovate UK, Greater Lincolnshire LEP, Suffolk County Council and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority on a UKRI Launchpad to grow innovation, sustainability and business growth in the east's Agri-Tech sector and food technology cluster. The Launchpad aims to achieve this by developing and applying technologies in food production and processing. In addition to benefitting the Agri-Tech and food technology fields, Launchpad's work will also positively impact the Agri-Biotech and Aquaculture sectors.

The Eastern England region is the national leader in fresh produce, meat, poultry, fish and seafood processing, underpinned by the largest food logistics sector in the UK. With regional collaboration, including our partnership work with the Food Valley in Greater Lincolnshire, Norfolk is well placed to support growth and encourage inward investment through promoting the scale, breadth and importance of the food sector to the area, and by ensuring that existing food sector companies and new investors are supported.



Life Sciences

Norwich Research Park

Norwich Research Park (NRP) is a world-leading research base, at the forefront of global food and health research. It is Europe's largest single site hub of research, training, education, and enterprise in food and health. It has four research institutes, a University Hospital and over 30 companies. The growing site has approximately 30,000 talented people - 12,000 of whom are scientists (including 3,000 researchers and clinicians) and continues to grow.

The industrial biotechnology expertise on site includes exciting companies such as HotHouse Therapeutics, Colorifix and Tropic Biosciences that are utilising industrial biotechnology to deliver new products and globally important research. This is an exciting industry that is leading to spin outs and commercialisation of research, significantly enhancing Norfolk's innovation ecosystem.

Utilising their strong industrial links and collaboration with the Norwich Research Park, the UEA's School of Biological Science undertakes impactful research which encompasses molecules, genes and genomes to populations and ecological communities. The research strives to better understand health and diseases, microbiology, evolutionary biology and ecology, conservation and plant biology.

A CLUSTER OF EXPERTISE

The £81m Quadram Institute helps to create a fundamental shift in the way we understand and address the impact of food on health. There is also a cluster of expertise in genome

analysis and manipulation of animal, microbial and plant systems for a wide range of applications.

Two projects that the Earlham Institute are part of are the Darwin Tree of Life project and the Earth Biogenomes project.

The objective of these initiatives is to attempt to sequence the genomes of all the species in the British and Irish isles and all the species on Earth respectively.

Recording all these genomes will create a huge database allowing researchers to access all the genomes they would need for comparing organisms – research that will have global and groundbreaking sustainability benefits.



Financial Services & Insurance

Financial Services is a significant sector for Norfolk, with specialisms in insurance and Insurtech. Financial services and insurance represent Norfolk's second highest sector in terms of GVA per head at a value of £136.8k.

Financial services and insurance generate 20% of Norwich's total GVA. If current momentum is built on, and Norfolk's GVA per capita approaches the average for England, this sector could generate a net additional £5bn per year (a 25% increase). This requires a multi-pronged effort to create and expand new businesses and jobs, attract more large companies to Norfolk and smartly leverage major investments like offshore wind.

In addition to Norwich, Broadland Gate Business Park presents another growth opportunity for financial and professional services. Its key location gives businesses access to the city and to major transport routes, and is a catalyst for inward investment into the region. It has played a significant role in the high levels of growth seen in Broadland in recent years: in 2021 it had the highest GVA of £3.9bn across all industries, including a peak for financial and insurance activities of £1.7bn.

FinTech has been identified as an important emerging sub sector for Norfolk, through the Norfolk FinTech Cluster report (2024).

Norfolk is home to over 24 FinTech firms, including the highest proportion of InsurTech firms of any English region outside London (16%).

HIGH VALUE JOBS

A recent report on Norfolk's FinTech sector has estimated that it currently generates £70m of GVA for the regional economy, but this could increase to £100m by 2027, creating 600 new jobs in Norfolk. This should lead to further innovation in the sector and economic growth, providing more high value jobs to Norfolk's residents.



Digital Tech

Norfolk is home to a fast-growing digital tech economy with a current GVA of £450m and around 9,000 employees and is increasingly important across a range of sectors and in its own right.

There are a number of locations in the county that are supporting the incubation of early-stage tech companies and providing access to much needed early-stage support, including Akcela, Hethel Innovation, UEA's Enterprise Centre and the Enterprise House at the Norwich Research Park, with more spaces emerging to support this key sector.

DEVELOPER NETWORKS

There are a wealth of developer networks in the region putting Norfolk on the map, with key events such as Sync the City and Nor(Dev): Con and opportunities to work with our universities through the Computer Science department at UEA and the array of digital creative courses at Norwich University of the Arts.

FILMING OPPORTUNITIES

Norfolk's film industry, which has been boosted by the recent establishment of the Norfolk Film Office, provides valuable opportunities for the digital tech sector. Norwich University of the Arts' pioneering 'Immersive Visualisation Lab' is the first of its kind in the UK and has only one other equivalent in Europe. This important digital asset has highly sophisticated facilities enabling research, collaboration and teaching, and presents a significant opportunity for the sector locally.

We are home to a cluster of digital creative businesses, particularly specialising in marketing; software developers; Agri-Tech, biotech and clean tech expertise; EdTech businesses; and home to exciting opportunities across FinTech and InsurTech; AI; E-Commerce; Games; MedTech and Health Innovations; and PropTech.

Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering



Lotus Cars, Hethel



Norfolk is home to 2150 advanced manufacturing and engineering companies, with an even distribution across the county, generating GVA of £2bn (10% of Norfolk's total GVA).

There are multiple specialisms within Norfolk including food and drink, automotive, aerospace, pharmaceutical, safety equipment and civil engineering with significant supply chain opportunities across clean energy.

COLLABORATIONS

We are keen to build on the work that the New Anglia Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering (NAAME) cluster has achieved in supporting Norfolk's manufacturing and engineering companies. NAAME facilitates collaborations with technology providers and supports B2B opportunities that have key sectoral priorities around increasing digital

adoption, driving decarbonisation and nurturing talent at all levels. NAAME's manufacturing groups cover Greater Norwich, Mid-Norfolk, King's Lynn, North Norfolk and the East Coast covering Great Yarmouth.

Norfolk will work with Government and partners across the East of England to bring the Made Smarter Programme to this region and deliver digitalisation support for manufacturers across the East.

PARTNERSHIPS

Productivity East is a regional hub for manufacturing, engineering, technology and management at the University of East Anglia. The hub fosters partnerships between academics from the school of engineering, the school of computer sciences, Norwich Business School, NAAME and industry.

The Hethel Engineering Centre is a major asset serving the high-performance engineering and manufacturing sector. The centre supports start-ups and scale-ups within the sector and works closely across sub-sectors.

In addition to Hethel, Norfolk attracts innovative manufacturers, including the growing base for pharmaceutical manufacturing in King's Lynn, which is the home for Bespak and Merxin.

A sub-sector within advanced manufacturing and engineering is the emerging space industry, with applications across a number of areas.

Space technology touches every sector and provides solutions to global challenges including those associated with climate change and connectivity. Relevant capabilities stem from the region's leading industries including advanced manufacturing and engineering, ICT & telecoms, food and agriculture, offshore wind, coastal, marine and bioscience.



Foundational Economy

As well as high growth and emerging sectors, it is really 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.



Goldsmith Street, Passivhaus Homes

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.

SECTOR	GVA	WORKFORCE
Culture, Heritage and Visitor Economy	£1.15bn	61,842
Health and Social Care	£1.66bn	61,399
Construction	£1.36bn	25,361

Culture, Heritage & Visitor Economy

We will build on Norfolk's rich heritage and culture, while enhancing tourism opportunities and bringing our local communities together.

Culture, heritage and visitor economy is a place-centered concept which describes the assets, infrastructure and services - including hospitality, retail, attractions and events - which support visitors and tourists. It is one of Norfolk's largest economic sectors and makes up close to 20 per cent of all jobs in the county - many of them in the most deprived coastal areas. In 2022, tourism trips alone provided the Norfolk economy with a total value of £3.4bn.

We have a wealth of visitor amenities and tourist attractions. Norwich is a Medieval city, boasting a Norman cathedral and refurbished castle, with an internationally significant art gallery and historic market place. Coastal locations from Great Yarmouth, through Cromer and Holt, round to Hunstanton are long-established and much-loved holiday destinations, with stunning beaches such as Gorleston-on-Sea. Equally well loved are Norfolk's distinctive market towns, with their rich heritage and thriving centres. The natural environment boasts a range of amenities including the Broads National Park and the Norfolk Coast Protected Landscape.

Collaboration with partner organisations, including local councils, the Broads Authority and Visit East of England, will be essential for the continued success of the sector. All these organisations have important local knowledge and networks and are already delivering so much for the county in this sector. There is also the opportunity for further investment around under-utilised heritage assets (such as the Guildhall in King's Lynn) and in the upkeep of existing assets like the Winter Gardens in Great Yarmouth or Cromer Clifftop Gardens.

SUSTAINABLE & ACCESSIBLE

We want to boost this further and, capitalising on Norfolk's recent success in being granted 'Local Visitor Economy Partnership' status by Visit England, make Norfolk an all-year, sustainable and accessible destination. This will drive increased job opportunities and retention in areas where they are most needed.

We want to support Norfolk to continue to be a desirable place for visitors and residents to spend their time, whether that be within town centres and high streets or at the county's many visitor attractions.

We will also support the digitalisation of businesses within the sector to enhance the overall offering and boost productivity. This will all be part of a wider ambition to raise GVA within this key sector of our economy, which currently sits at a low GVA per head value of £18.6k.

Norfolk has welcomed a number of large-scale film productions in recent years. Olsberg SPI research, commissioned by Norfolk County Council, found that 26 locations (mainly historic sites and coastal areas) hosted the production of Film and TV. It is estimated that activity such as this brings in £1.9 million annually to the local economy.

There are significant opportunities to build on this - including utilising the incredible talent at our colleges and universities - and activity is underway to invest in the future of Norfolk's screen sector through the Norfolk Film Office pilot.

STRENGTHS IN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

As England's first UNESCO City of Literature and home to the renowned Theatre Royal, Norwich is a city steeped in creativity. Producing and nurturing this creative talent are prestigious institutions such as the UEA and Norwich University of the Arts. The UEA's award-winning Creative Writing MA has celebrated alumni such as Kazuo Ishiguro, Ian McEwan and Rose Tremain. Thriving on the character of Norwich, the Norwich University of the Arts specialises in industry leading research and innovation.

Cultural activity draws in a significant number of visitors to Norwich. Whether that be literary, games and film festivals hosted by The Forum or the Norfolk and Norwich Festival and much more besides, this activity forms an important part of the Norwich economy and has the potential to expand further.

Construction

The Construction sector is a key part of the Norfolk economy and is a regional specialism for the East of England. It is currently responsible for £1.36bn of Norfolk GVA and employs a workforce of 25,361.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

The National agenda clearly sets the built environment as a priority. In line with this, Norfolk has some ambitious plans for housing growth with many planned developments in strategic locations, including urban extensions in the Norwich Growth Triangle, West Winch, Fakenham and North Walsham, and large-scale urban regeneration in Norwich, Great Yarmouth, Thetford and King's Lynn. There is also an identified need for commercial space which represents further opportunity, including suitable accommodation for key growth sectors such as clean energy, Agri-Food and advanced manufacturing, A-Grade office space, accessible rural workspace and coworking facilities. The infrastructure that unlocks these domestic and commercial developments will require construction expertise.

The importance of developing Green construction skills and a local sustainable materials supply chain cannot be understated in relation to the roadmap to Net Zero. Sustainable new builds and retrofitted current stock will play a central role in reducing carbon emissions in Norfolk.

The construction industry needs to be supported to innovate – advances in materials, fabrication and processes can contribute to the sector's ability to thrive. Building on a culture of long-standing, successful Norfolk construction firms, there is an opportunity to work with local SME's to champion best practice and support growth.

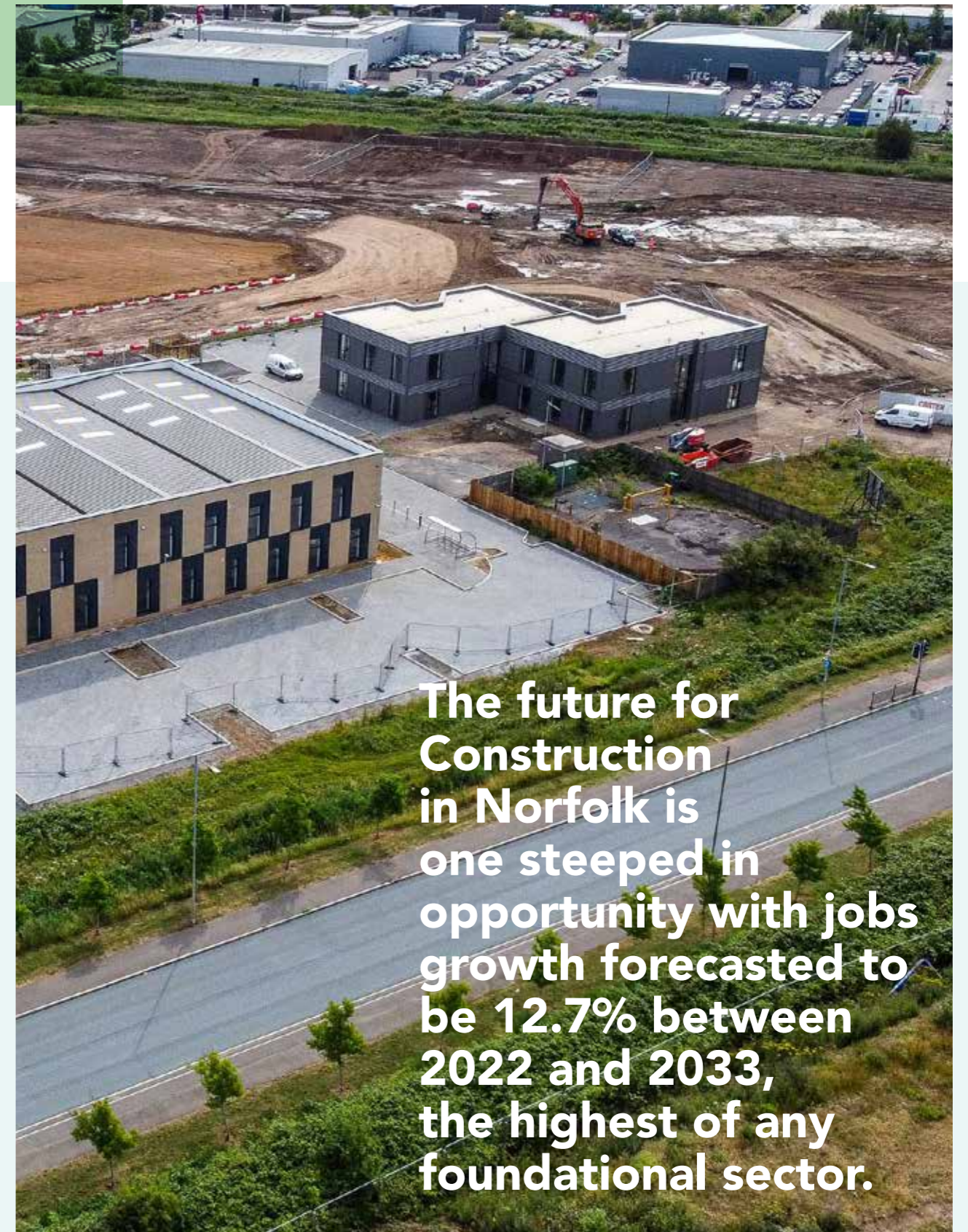
CHALLENGES FOR CONSTRUCTION SECTOR

Labour market challenges include a lack of core skills for new Green technology application, despite wage potential being good. Construction businesses will need to work with skills providers to direct the necessary resources into developing the workforce. This is an opportunity and a challenge. Labour market challenges may arise due to a number of planned major NSIP regional construction projects and the skills need of the wider sector, particularly those associated with Sizewell C in Suffolk.

In some areas, there are local viability gaps which hinder sites from coming forward and may require proportionate public sector intervention. Examples include the large-scale regeneration of Anglia Square in Norwich and the more targeted intervention around degraded housing stock in Great Yarmouth.

The issue of nutrient neutrality has disproportionately affected Norfolk because of its landscape and environment. This challenge is expected to recede as a result of Norfolk leading the way on the development of unlocking mitigation through Nutrient Neutral Development - and Norfolk Environmental Credits.

These challenges have been exacerbated by national trends including materials shortages post-Covid and supply-chain inflation impacting the viability of projects.



The future for Construction in Norfolk is one steeped in opportunity with jobs growth forecasted to be 12.7% between 2022 and 2033, the highest of any foundational sector.

King's Lynn Enterprise Park

Health and Social Care

Our vision for Norfolk is to be the place where everyone can start life well, live well and age well and where no one is left behind.

Health and Social care is a significant sector for Norfolk, employing over 60,710 people and contributing £2.1bn in GVA. It is important we future proof this sector, with an ageing population of over 24.8% of residents aged 65+ (UK average is lower at 18.7%) which is forecast to rise in Norfolk over the next 10 years. Our profiles suggest we will have high demand for Health and Social care provision.

Norfolk currently has a market of over 500 providers of care services but needs to do more to keep up with the increasing demands for the sector. To meet government targets of reducing waiting times for appointments and to create further appointments in the NHS, we will need to invest further in the training and development of healthcare professionals. The UEA Dentistry School and the College of West Anglia Nursing School will enhance skills and development in their respective areas and help to attract healthcare professionals to Norfolk.

Health and Social care faces significant challenges, including those related to recruitment, the post-Brexit landscape and the rural nature of the county. However, the sector offers valuable and meaningful employment, and needs to be supported and promoted to attract employees.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

People's health and wellbeing often varies from one place to another and is not solely affected by lifestyle choices. It can also be affected by the places around us, like living in an area with low levels of crime, safe places to enjoy the outdoors, good jobs, and quality housing. The unequal distribution of the social determinants of health, such as education, housing, and employment drive inequalities in physical and mental health.

INEQUALITY

Economic inequality also correlates with difference in life expectancy between towns and districts. For example, a male in Loddon (an area with comparatively low levels of deprivation) can expect to live to 83.3 years but a male in Great Yarmouth (an area with comparatively high levels of deprivation) can expect to live 75.1 years. A female living in Loddon can expect to live for 85.8 years but a

female in King's Lynn can expect to live for 81 years.

Although health in Norfolk is generally better than the national average, we know that there are persistent health inequalities especially in areas of deprivation.

The Covid-19 pandemic revealed the existence and prevalence of inequalities of various kinds. Through the adverse effects of the pandemic, more people have now also experienced challenges related to health, employment and personal finance. Tackling interrelated challenges such as these and inequalities is essential to addressing economic inactivity and alleviating pressures on Health and Social Care.

This shows us that people's health and the economy cannot be viewed independently. Both are necessary foundations of a flourishing and prosperous society.

LOCALITY	MALE	WOMEN
Great Yarmouth	75.1 years	81.2 years
King's Lynn	76.7 years	81 years
Loddon, South Norfolk	83.3 years	85.8 years
Norfolk average	80 years	83.8 years

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 very distinct and 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 are an outward looking, trading economy, with faster rising imports and exports than the East of England. Our firms want to stay and grow here, there is strong business demand for grow on space, particularly for mixed office and industrial use, for which supply is not keeping pace.

Similar to most other parts of the UK, Norfolk is also a diverse economy, 99.7% of firms are SMEs and micro businesses with the largest employers being health care, retail, tourism and food. With many agricultural, seasonal tourism and leisure businesses, pressures from seasonal labour supply and costs are acute.

Overall, our business base has grown more slowly than the East of England and England as a whole (14% between 2013-2023, compared to 21% and 23% respectively). This lack of new businesses particularly effects our coastal towns, with only 4% in Great Yarmouth and low levels also in King's Lynn and West Norfolk as well as North Norfolk. As our major growth sectors continue to thrive there are big opportunities to drive business start-up rates and growth in local and wider supply chains. Many of the businesses we spoke to had practical examples of how they could purchase more locally and partner with new local businesses. Business survival rates after three years are 7% higher in Norfolk compared to the UK average whereas growth rates in existing businesses are similar to the UK.

Our efforts to draw together the region's innovation ecosystem through Connected Innovation, which has secured multiple locked-off innovation funding opportunities, and through the Innovation Grant Mentoring Project, providing free support for bid applications to Innovate UK, have helped to shift the dial. Investment in research and innovation has been growing in 2022/23, Norfolk received around £4.7m Innovate UK funding, which has been the highest award over the ten-year period. We want to keep building on this success, making Norfolk a great place to start innovative businesses, secure investment and scale up.

Productivity is still lower than the East of England and England with little recent improvement, reducing our ability to increase wages and living standards through business growth.

We need to do more to harness our strengths so that more businesses and residents benefit.

Priority 1 Actions:

DEVELOP LOCAL CLUSTERS AND REMOVE BARRIERS TO GROWTH

- Construction of the **Great Yarmouth Operations & Maintenance Campus**, enabling O&M facilities for the development of one of the world's largest offshore windfarms and its associated supply chain. Supporting the development of the South Denes area and **Energy Park** – creating additional space.
- A new **Hydrogen Hub** will focus on the production of hydrogen from gas underpinned by carbon capture and storage, also known as “blue” hydrogen, to help meet growing demand across the region. We will also support future plans to extend this to renewable powered electrolytic, or “green” hydrogen.
- Development of the **Norfolk FinTech Cluster**. We aim to develop the emerging cluster by working with financial and tech businesses, our universities and local government with the opportunity of 600 new jobs. We will support the creation of a new entity that will sit as part of a national network of FinTech clusters, firmly putting Norfolk's FinTech sector on the map, building on opportunities such as a FinTech Hub for Norwich.
- **Digital Hub** workspace at Townsend House, Norwich, once home to the regional HQ of ITV, will support tech start-ups in the city and ensure talent is retained in Norfolk as part of a wider tech start up and scale up ecosystem that includes incubators **Akcela** and **Innovation Labs**. The Digital Hub will provide office space, with room for between 10 to 25 companies and around 200 jobs.
- The development of the manufacturing enterprise centre at Snetterton Commercial Hub will benefit from its strategic location within the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor (CNTC). The park offers over 750,000 sq feet of floor space and has attracted notable companies such as Hitachi Construction Machinery and Equipmake. We will continue to grow this sector and strengthen the opportunities arising from the CNTC.
- We will build on the impressive talent pipeline from gaming industry accredited courses at Norwich University of the Arts. We will seek to develop a Norwich Games Hub, to bring together start-ups and networks like the Norfolk Game Developers to collaborate and support growth both in the sector but also to help other sectors like construction and manufacturing benefit from these increasingly in demand disciplines.
- To help creative industries thrive further in our region and build on the success of the Creative East programme, we need to support ambitions for growth and help create the high value jobs we need to retain and attract the top talent. This will help to reinforce Norwich's pre-eminence in the sector and nurture creative talent and output borne in the county.

STRENGTHEN LOCAL SUPPLY CHAINS

- Build on the **Norfolk Local Economy Partnership** (LVEP), accredited by VisitEngland, to support the development of the tourism sector and to leverage investment.
- Development of the **Food Enterprise Park** (FEP), a 100-acre development site within the Greater Norwich Food Enterprise Zone (the first 46 acres benefit from Local Development Order status) to encourage and support food production, processing and agriculture. Within the FEP is the Broadland Food Innovation Centre, a site specifically for food and drink SMEs to add value to products and start-ups, offering the optimum environment for innovation and growth.
- **Working with the Agri-Food Industry Council to build on the wider regional focus on Agri-Food and Agri-Tech** with partners across the East of England and Greater Lincolnshire to maximise opportunities around spin-outs, commercialisation of research, technology adoption and supporting key priorities around biodiversity net gain and food security.
- Building on existing research into Agri-Food Decarbonisation, we will look to support Norfolk's farmers. Examples of this may include tailored business support packages that enable small and medium sized farms to access specialist support, exploring the potential of digital twinning to dry test different interventions or through the opportunity presented by the Norfolk County Farms Estate (the second largest county farm estate in the country).
- The creation of a new **Food Hall at the Norfolk Showground**, just a few miles from the Food Enterprise Park. The Food Hall will act as a key showcase giving route to market for hundreds of local producers and will further support supply chains in food and drink.
- Pilot a **Norfolk Film Office** working together with the Norfolk Film Office Steering Group. Large-scale TV or film productions generate an increase in business for a wide range of supply chain companies surrounding a filming location, from cafés to taxi companies, accommodation businesses and retail. The Norfolk Film Office will proactively promote the county and its assets as a location for TV and film productions, with a current UK market opportunity of £6.2bn, which is projected to grow.
- **Maximise the supply chain benefits from regional clean energy projects** that are nationally significant infrastructure projects, working with the Offshore Renewable Energy Catapult, Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Research Catapult and the Norfolk Chambers of Commerce. Through the development of new supply chain programmes and by supporting companies to access these opportunities, we can ensure local clean energy firms scale-up, employ more people in our key coastal areas and have a platform to export their expertise.
- We will look to **support the manufacturing and engineering sector's adoption of digital technologies** as the GVA impact for Norfolk is significant when this is done well, and this can create even more high quality jobs. This will enable companies to become more productive and engage with supply chain opportunities within the region and enable export opportunities.

STRENGTHEN INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS

- Norfolk is leading the way in progressing a fully connected rural and urban **innovation cluster** through the **Connected Innovation Programme**, which brings together innovation hubs, incubators, universities, research institutes, business innovation clusters, angel investors and wider innovation funding opportunities. This will continue to simplify innovation support for our businesses, enable work with universities and research institutes to develop regional spin-outs and commercialisation and keep driving cross-sector innovation opportunities. We will continue to leverage this network to land new opportunities to support our innovation ecosystem.
- Alongside the Norfolk and Suffolk Innovation Board and the Connected Innovation network, we will deliver and build upon the Innovate UK Local Action Plan. This will maximise opportunities with UKRI and Innovate UK, including knowledge transfer partnerships, engagements with the Catapult Network and scale-up support from Innovate UK Business Growth.
- We will sustain business support programmes like the **Innovation Grant Mentoring project**, which has already helped businesses in Norfolk and Suffolk to access over £2m of Innovate UK funding, addressing the market failure of a low uptake of innovation funding in Norfolk.
- Major UKRI **£317.7m** investment is planned for a new **Plant and Microbial Innovation Hub** at the John Innes Centre and Sainsbury Laboratory at the Norwich Research Park, helping address significant global challenges of ensuring we have healthy plants, healthy people and a healthy planet.
- Build on the UK High Potential Opportunity for Norfolk's **Agri-Biotech and Life Sciences sector**. This attracts overseas investment into the Norwich Research Park, and supports access to finance and a higher number of spin out companies, through the commercialisation of research around plant science for nutrition, gut health and climate change.
- We will continue to develop innovative clusters, such as the King's Lynn Enterprise Park (a centre for advanced manufacturing and engineering), to attract cutting-edge international businesses to the district. Equally, we will also nurture new business incubators, such as the Great Yarmouth Business Incubator in South Denes. Both will drive business growth in Norfolk and the region.

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.

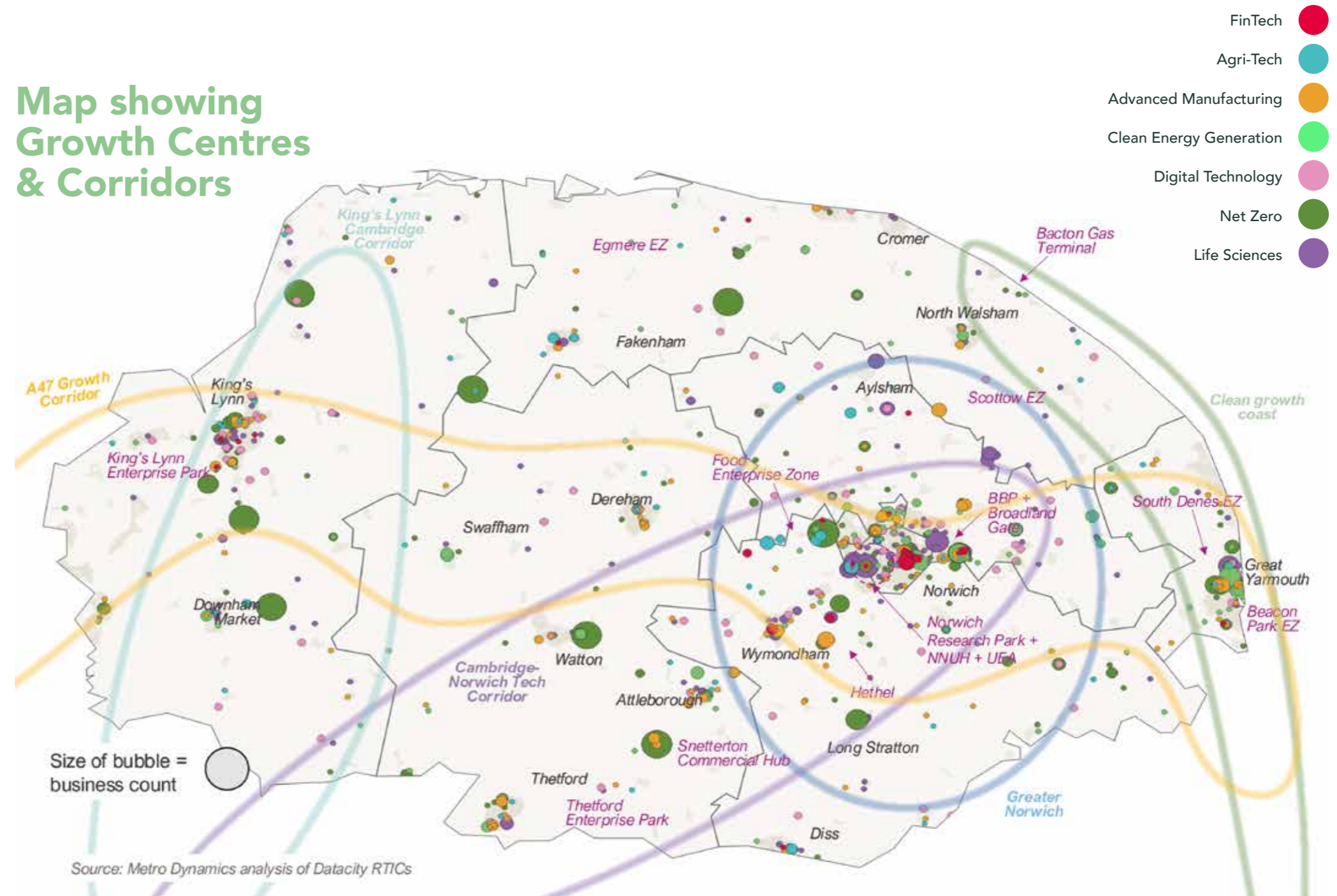
The A47 Growth Corridor offers strategic connections between businesses and sectors across the main urban centres of Norfolk.

The employment of land allocation is set out in district council local plans. Districts and other partners will maximise the impact and delivery of these allocations by working together to integrate investment and action in infrastructure, commercial space, supply chain support and skills.

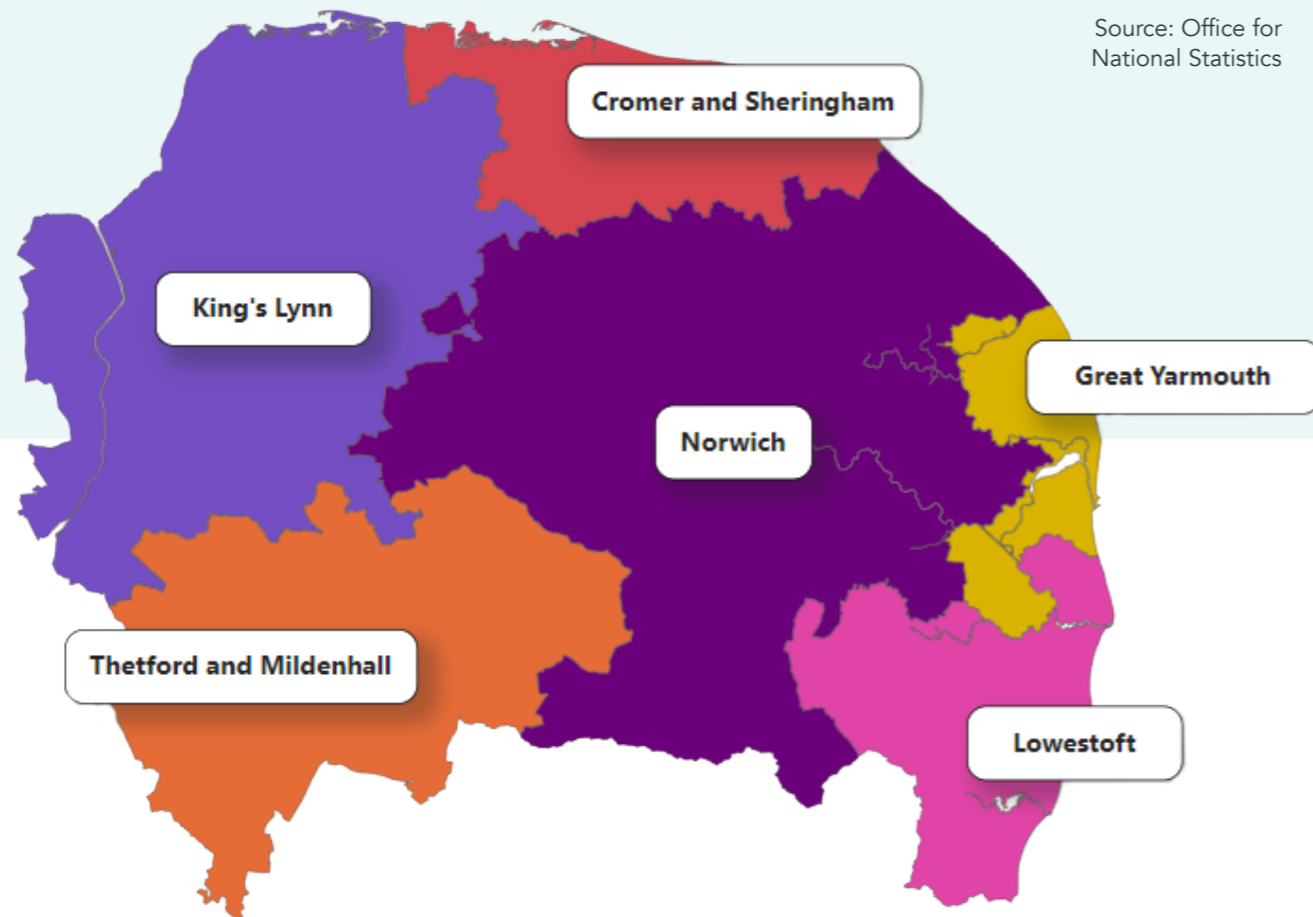
We will focus on our strategic business growth locations. This will ensure we can connect more residents to opportunities and retain more value locally whilst helping businesses to recruit and grow in the locations that make most sense to them.

Taking this kind of integrated approach to the infrastructure needed to support business, housing and employment growth will also support our high-employment sectors, such as tourism, retail, healthcare, education, to prosper and provide good-quality jobs.

Map showing Growth Centres & Corridors



Map showing Travel to Work Areas



Source: Office for National Statistics

Functional economic geography of Norfolk

In addition to the growth corridors that have been identified and linked to sector and housing growth, Norfolk is also defined by a set of functional economic relationships. These relationships are defined by flows of labour and goods and services.

The above map outlines the travel to work areas (TTWA) which fall within Norfolk and Lowestoft. TTWAs are a statistical tool used by UK government agencies and local authorities to indicate an area where the population would generally commute to a larger town, city or conurbation for the purposes of employment. The criteria for a TTWA are that at least 75% of the area's resident workforce work in the area and at least 75% of those working in the area also live there. The area must also have an economically active population of at least 3,500.

The map highlights the significance of larger settlements with high population densities and their role in sustaining employment across the county. Norwich plays a particularly significant role in the Greater Norwich Area and beyond.

Priority 2 Actions:

DELIVERING THE RIGHT TYPES AND MIX OF COMMERCIAL SPACE WHERE IT IS NEEDED. SUPPORTING CLUSTER GROWTH IN BUSINESS PARKS, ENTERPRISE ZONES AND RESEARCH CENTRES

- **East Norwich**, which sits across a number of sites, including the former Carrow Works site, represents one of the most significant opportunities for the regeneration of this area and the wider city. It is an ambitious project to create a sustainable new urban quarter for the city, supported by the preparation of a masterplan for East Norwich and a commitment to substantial future investment. The masterplan shows a mixed use for commercial, housing, tourism and environmental activities. In addition to housing and industrial opportunities, the site will specifically capitalise on the beautiful waterfront and presents a significant opportunity for recreational, tourism and heritage activities. The site will generate significant jobs and investment for the city.
- We will identify opportunities to unlock land for commercial space. The development of a **new roundabout at Hethel** will improve access to the site and support the expansion of industrial development. In **Norwich**, there are opportunities for **additional high-grade office space** within the centre and outskirts of the city.
- **Hethel Engineering Centre** is an award-winning business centre and innovation hub on the outskirts of Norwich, serving the high-performance engineering and manufacturing sector. Established 14 years ago, the centre has created over 1,000 jobs, incubated over 200 businesses and supported over 180 start-ups. We want to support the expansion of Hethel, to double in size, to provide much needed space to grow for existing and new tenants.
- **King's Lynn Enterprise Park** is an Enterprise Zone just off the A47 and comprises 15-hectares of serviced employment land and can accommodate approximately 40,000m² of employment floor space. Sites are available for a range of uses including office and industrial spaces and research and development. The development of the King's Lynn Enterprise Park will be crucial for ensuring growth of our advanced engineering and manufacturing cluster, connecting to the A10 corridor, and linking to start-up support and innovation at the King's Lynn Innovation Centre (KLIC).
- **Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor (CNTC)** is home to world-leading universities, research institutes and science parks, complemented by an ecosystem of knowledge-intensive businesses and networks to support innovation through to commercialisation and manufacturing. There is significant opportunity for site development, attracting inward investment into the county. One of the key sites is **Snetterton Commercial Hub**, with over 40 businesses located on site and 25 hectares (40 acres) available for immediate development.
- With all our spatial growth plans, it is imperative we are promoting **biodiversity** and ecosystems, and making sure they are taken into consideration in strategic decisions. Projects such as **Wendling Beck**, a 2,000-acre nature recovery project in Norfolk, creating habitats and supporting nature-driven processes on a large scale, are a good example. We want to create more biodiversity net gain and ensure our growth plans are sustainable, mitigating environmental impacts.
- Development of 'Grow on Space' at the **Norwich Research Park (NRP)**. The NRP offers development opportunities to new, growing and established businesses. The Park has a total community of over 40 businesses. These companies are a critical part of the Park's vision as businesses can turn research into real-world applications that can benefit people's lives. Further grow on space is required, with many offices and labs at full capacity. The Park has Enterprise Zone status and 1.6m sq ft of planning consent for future builds.
- **Scottow Enterprise Park** is a former airbase and a leading North Norfolk business park, with units ranging from 100 sq ft to 61,000 sq ft. There are emerging clusters of film and TV, manufacturing and space technology within the park. We want to ensure continued growth and maximise opportunities associated with the four unique WW2 aircraft hangers on site.
- The **Beacon Park** and **South Denes Enterprise Zones** will act as vital hubs for the offshore energy sector and will help to foster other business activity arising from the success of the sector which will drive economic growth in Great Yarmouth and Gorleston.
- Delivery of the **South Denes Masterplan** which includes a clean energy business incubator, setting out strategic investments that will support cluster growth in one of Norfolk's key sectors. With Enterprise Zone status, a number of areas will also benefit from a simplified planning process. This will help to accelerate the pace of the development and the provision of commercial space.



College of West Anglia School of Nursing Studies opened in 2022, with key grant funding provided by the King's Lynn Town Deal.

The state-of-the-art modular building comprises a clinical room mirroring a new-scale hospital ward, a high-tech simulation suite and a skills room. The School of Nursing Studies is the first further education facility in the United Kingdom to boast the Laerdal SimMan 3G+; high-tech simulation mannequins which can

replicate physiological functions such as breathing, pulses, convulsions, temperature and blood pressure. These latest models provide an opportunity for learners to develop their skills and knowledge by recreating authentic clinical scenarios and situations in a progressive and supportive environment.

SUPPORTING THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SECTOR TO BECOME MORE RESILIENT, AND HELP TO ADDRESS HEALTH INEQUALITIES THAT EXIST WITHIN OUR COUNTY

- Work to strengthen the organisations (e.g. care homes) that deliver health and social care. This includes support to deliver robust business plans, cost models and steps to future proof organisations.
- Opportunities to invest in preventative measures will help to bridge gaps in inequality in the long term. We will do so by working with key partners in the sector, such as the College of West Anglia School of Nursing, and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn to continue to build the pipeline of trained professionals. At the same time, 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.
- Support to improve the quality of care jobs and to work with providers to create career pathways, to attract more people to the profession
- Encourage further collaboration between economic development teams, public health and industry, to maximise opportunities for local residents - particularly those in deprived areas of Norfolk. Incorporating social value into plans for infrastructure development and industry growth could also maximise opportunities for local residents. Examples could include apprenticeship opportunities, work experience placements and encouraging local employment.

Measures of Impact:

- Increase average GVA per capita for Norfolk
- Increase business count in our key sectors
- Increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and domestic inward investment, no. of businesses locating to Norfolk, jobs created and investment
- Collaboration with clusters and new regional initiatives which secure funding
- Increase in translational and spin-out activity in clusters with new products and processes developed
- Growth in agricultural productivity and increased take-up of sustainable methods of production
- More people developing the right skills for opportunities in digital creative businesses
- Norfolk businesses supported to innovate and grow
- Social value assessments for major infrastructure projects e.g. no. of apprenticeships or jobs accessed by local residents.

Success Stories



Success Story —

iBoxit

Norwich Research Park

iBOXiT, a start-up founded in 2018 at the Norwich Research Park, makes reusable pallets and packaging from sustainable recycled materials.

Through an EU-ERA (European Research Area) grant, iBOXiT established that Chitosan, a naturally occurring anti-microbial, could be incorporated into food packaging to extend shelf life and guard against pathogens. Chitosan is typically isolated from shellfish shells but can't be used in food packaging due to the presence of heavy metals.

Anglia Innovation Partnership awarded Pre-Seed Enterprise Funds to iBOXiT and collaborator Sheng Qi (UEA) to undertake a proof-of-concept study that showed Chitosan could be isolated from button mushroom waste in the UK.

On the back of this evidence the team secured an Innovate UK grant to demonstrate how the extraction and application to packaging can be scaled up, and secured Norfolk's largest award at £850,000. The application was supported by the Innovation Grant Mentoring Project.

John Farley, founder and CEO of iBoxit, said: "iBoxit was created with a goal of giving something back – of creating sustainable, planet friendly packaging in the hands of businesses to allow them to ship goods in a way that does the least possible damage to the environment. Thanks to this grant, we can really get to work on our new project and start to find a way to help the fishing industry cut down on pollution while still getting fresh, healthy food to people across the country."

The project will work in partnership with the University of East Anglia, with the aim of revolutionising the seafood packing industry.

"We've received some wonderful support from the Innovation Grant Mentoring Project and without their help we wouldn't have this funding or this opportunity to get to work on making a key food industry less polluting and more efficient."

Great Yarmouth Operations & Maintenance Campus

Great Yarmouth Energy Coast

The offshore energy sector provides Great Yarmouth and Norfolk with one of the single most important economic opportunities for a generation.

Oil and Gas has been a mainstay of the local economy for over 50 years and the recent emergence of offshore renewables has presented Great Yarmouth's port, its supply chain and its skills base with the chance of enjoying hugely significant growth and investment. The Great Yarmouth Operations and Maintenance Campus is expected to provide a major boost to the region's offshore energy sector.

Commissioned by Norfolk County Council, the £24.8m partnership project is a collaboration with Great Yarmouth Borough Council and seeks to capitalise on the now well-established offshore

renewables sector off the east coast and the Enterprise Zone that covers sites in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

The enabling works are expected to complete in 2024 and will see 190m of river quay refurbished and upgraded, along with the creation of new vessel pontoons and delivery of a revised road layout and associated infrastructure, to optimise the land available for future development. Once the campus is fully built out, it will create 650 new jobs and new commercial space.

In addition, the provision of a South Denes Business Incubator for clean energy start-ups will play an integral role in nurturing growth within the cluster

As a key investment opportunity under Great Yarmouth's Town Deal and the borough council's strategy for economic growth, its delivery is expected to provide a welcome boost to the local economy; supporting employment growth in the area.



Success Story —

Lotus Cars Expansion

Hethel

Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor

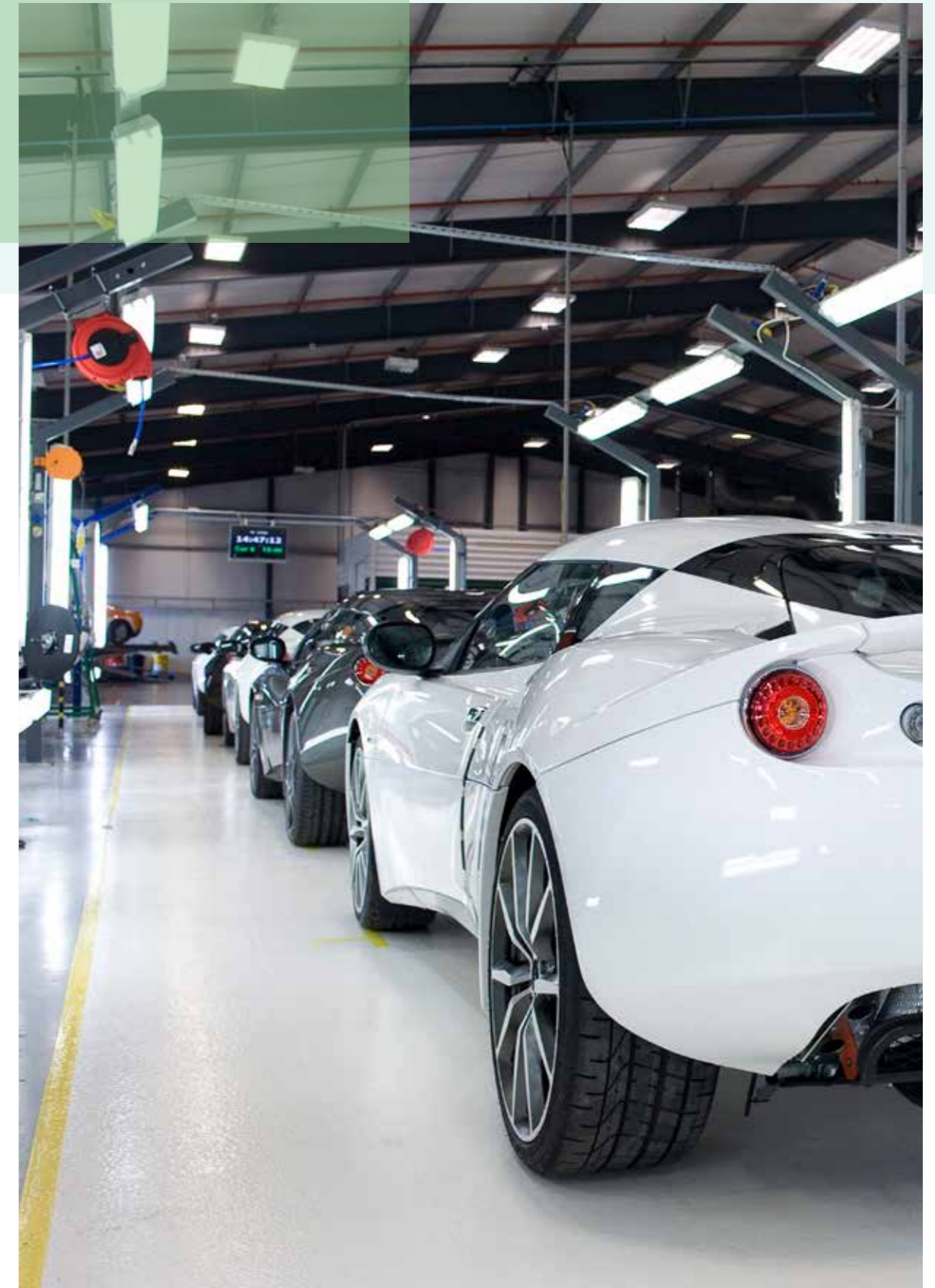
Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering is a key sector for Norfolk. Lotus Cars are planning a major expansion of its technology park at Hethel, located on the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor.

Lotus has committed that their next mainstream sports car will be an all-electric vehicle. To facilitate this commitment, they require new buildings that will allow them to install a production line to enable them to build an EV sports car. Investment at Hethel to support the transition to EV sports car production and its world-renowned engineering consultancy.

The majority of vehicles currently built are the Emira sports car, the first new Lotus product since the Chinese automotive group Geely bought a 51% stake in 2017. Geely has invested more than £3bn in Lotus, ahead of planning for EV sports car production.

Lotus says the development will allow the business “to take the next step of growth and innovation at their Hethel HQ”.

Plans include construction of three new buildings - the project seeks to establish production, logistics and office buildings - alongside new road infrastructure.



Downham Market

Business – Supporting Norfolk's businesses



Puddin Cakery, Thetford



Tutankhamun's Emporium Swaffham



The Place University Centre Great Yarmouth



Survive, thrive, innovate & grow...

Our businesses and the people who work in them are the engine of our economy. It is their skills and energy that will enable Norfolk to make the transition to a lower carbon and more inclusive economy. To achieve this, we need businesses of all types to succeed.

From the smallest lifestyle business to social enterprises and the largest financial services firm, all organisations have a vital role to play. Therefore, a major goal of this strategy is to support businesses of all types to innovate, change, succeed and grow where applicable.

SUPPORTING GAINS

We aim to create more high growth businesses and support the gains in productivity that underpin wage growth. We want to foster an entrepreneurial culture in Norfolk

and support more people to set up flourishing businesses and social enterprises. We aspire to encourage greater innovation through R&D, further use of digital technology, AI and knowledge transfer and support access to innovation funds and peer-to-peer learning between companies.

Our aspirations are even more important considering the challenging climate that many businesses have faced both locally and nationally. The UK economy staged a recovery from recession following the end of 2023, after shrinking for two consecutive three-month periods. Real GDP growth is expected to be 0.3% in

2024, and to increase to 0.9% in 2025. The longer-term outlook is for growth of just 1% this decade. The new Government has prioritised economic growth with a number of new policy announcements. Interest rates are also expected to fall over the long term.

Low productivity is a significant obstacle for the national economy but is an even more prominent problem in Norfolk. GVA per hour is £32.9 in Norfolk, compared to the UK average of £37.7. Improving productivity is central to increasing wages and supporting business growth. Therefore, we will ensure that we continue to develop productivity-

boosting interventions to support micro businesses. This could include support for business strategy and operations, access to R&D funding, or the introduction of new digital technologies to improve efficiency.

Nearly a third of UK businesses are experiencing labour shortages after an increase in economic inactivity following the Covid-19 pandemic. In Norfolk, labour and skills shortages are critical in sectors such as Agri-Food, engineering and health and social care, but are evident in all sectors. Recent increases in the number of people leaving work between 50-65 voluntarily (rather than leaving work primarily due to worsening health) combined with a comparatively older population, make this issue particularly acute for Norfolk and is a major challenge in many of our coastal and rural areas.

Many of these challenges have been particularly acute for SMEs. Norfolk has a high number of small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) (99.7%) with the majority of these businesses classified as micro (88%) with less than ten employees.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

To combat these challenges and ensure success, high quality business support is essential. The front door for business support in Norfolk is delivered by the New Anglia Growth Hub. The Growth Hub provide free, fully funded, impartial support and advice for businesses who have been trading for over twelve months. The Growth Hub undertake a diagnostic of business needs, provide direct support and refer businesses to a wide range of specialist support programmes and providers, including access to finance, depending on the requirements of a business. Over the past ten years, the Growth Hub has supported over 14,000 businesses and delivered over 74,000 hours of support. Working with partners and providers across Norfolk, we aim to build on this success and strengthen these services to ensure our Growth Hub is tailored to meet the needs of Norfolk businesses. We will also raise the profile of the support services offered.



63%

BUSINESS SURVIVAL +3YRS
vs 56% for England



99.7%
SME
BUSINESSES



88%
MICRO
BUSINESSES

in Norfolk



£32.9

PRODUCTIVITY LEVELS
GVA PER HOUR
vs £37.7 for UK



£588

AVG GROSS WEEKLY
WAGES
vs £645 for England

High Growth and Innovation Business Investment Programmes

With a high number of graduates and strong tech base, Norfolk is primed for high growth and provides the perfect place for investment. So that businesses can continue to thrive and expand, there is an array of specialist support programmes and initiatives available.

Early-stage innovation businesses benefit from the **Anglia Capital Group**. As a network of angel investors situated across Norfolk and Suffolk, it has supported businesses including Aviva spin-off Piki, Developing Experts and PFBio. The group's transformative **Halo Programme**, an investment readiness programme led by Norfolk and Suffolk's business Angel Network and supported by a network of local experts, seeks to support early-stage businesses to pitch for Angel Investment. Two cohorts have passed through the programme which has resulted in ten businesses being supported across a range of sectors.

As a world leading base for research, the Norwich Research Park is a much sought after destination for new businesses. To support the creation and development of these new businesses, **Anglia Innovation Partnership's Enterprise Strategy** was created. Not only does it facilitate investment opportunities, but it also attracts investors to the research park to showcase the investment return potential of spin-outs and startups. A quarterly 'Enterprise Tuesday' acts an important showcase event for potential investors.

For those early-stage tech businesses not based at the research park, **Barclays Ecosystem Partners 'The Future'** programme (run by Akcela in Norfolk),

provides a bespoke support offering which is focused on entrepreneurs from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. The programme is a partnership between Barclays Eagle Labs and Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils and has supported a high number of entrepreneurs from across Norfolk and Suffolk.

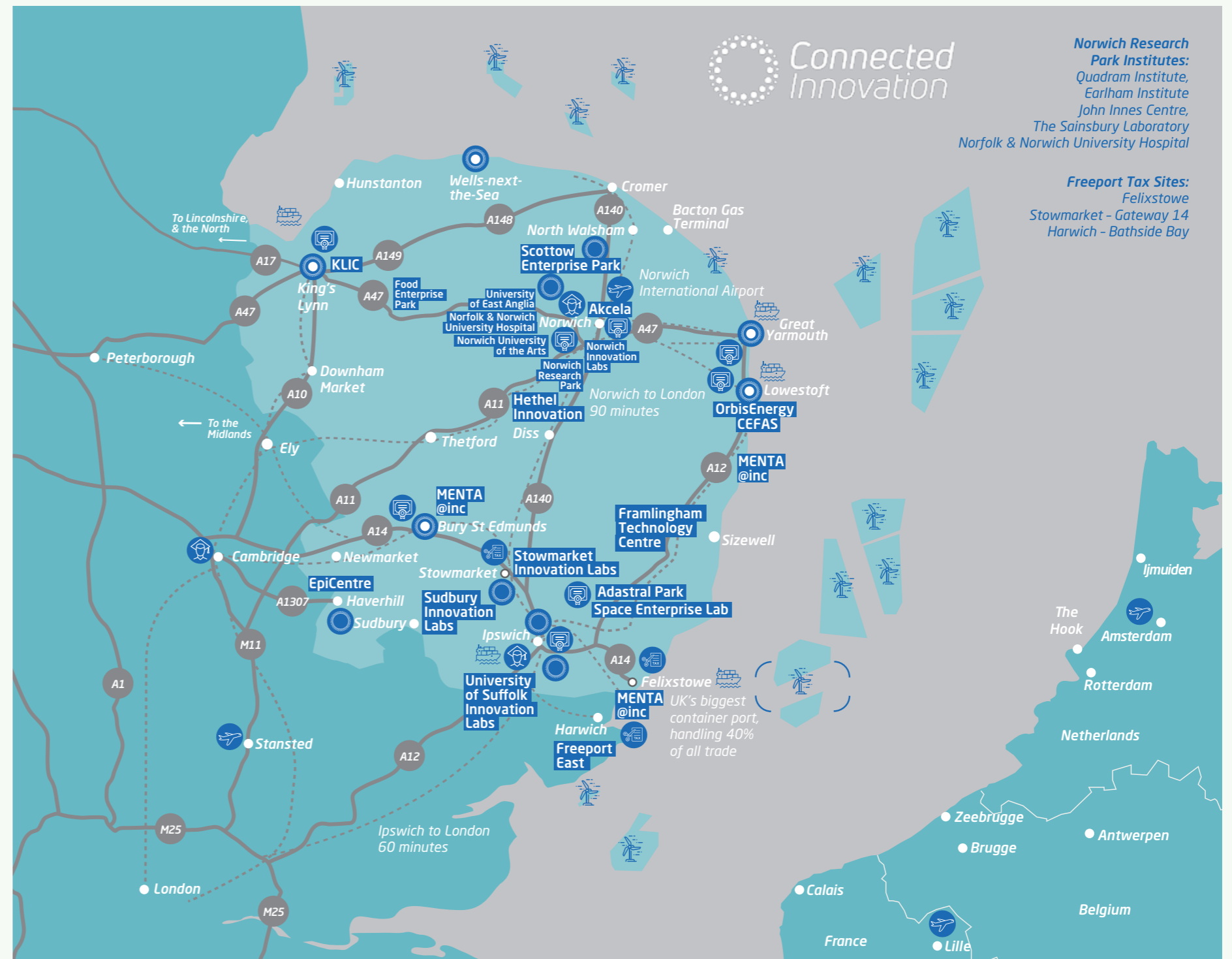
Companies that are in a position to expand can benefit from the **Akcela Incubation Programme** which was established by entrepreneurs with experience of scaling businesses. For companies that join the incubator, they have access to a network of companies and support to enable scaling and growth. Lasting typically between eighteen to twenty-four months, the programme also enables access to workspace and meetings rooms in Norwich. As a result of this programme, companies have been able to benefit from other initiatives which has included securing funding from Innovate UK to support with business scaling.

CONNECTED INNOVATION

The Connected Innovation network links together 25 of Norfolk and Suffolk's leading innovation, science, and research hubs into one of the UK's most collaborative regional innovation clusters.

The network, launched in 2021, encompasses a number of technology capabilities such as AI, robotics, 5G connectivity, quantum, satellite applications, agri-tech, biotech, cleantech and fintech, to drive innovation-led growth in key sectors including agri-food, health and life sciences, offshore renewables, manufacturing and engineering, creative industries, financial services and insurance.

The map illustrates the innovation landscape and assets. It has been taken from the East of England Connected Innovation brochure.



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.

Norfolk has a better than UK average for survival of new businesses at 63% after 3 years, compared to the UK average of 56%. There are a number of organisations providing start-up support, such as Norfolk's Business Intellectual Property Centres, located in Norfolk Libraries – providing free workshops, start-up support, access to databases and IP support, in addition to networking and events. Start-up support also comes from organisations such as MENTA, NWES and Hethel Innovation. Support includes workshops and 1-to-1 support on business planning, marketing, book-keeping, sustainability, sales and access to finance.

We want to provide business support and start-up support services county-wide, so all residents have access to support services. We want to ensure that support is appropriate at the right stage of the business journey and growth cycle, creating support programmes that meet these different needs. We also want to ensure that start-up support is provided for Social Enterprises and CICs.

Another aspect of supporting businesses is to ensure that city and town centres reflect their needs. This includes the provision of adequate commercial space with suitable facilities (such as co-working and meeting spaces) and the necessary infrastructure (including digital connectivity). One area which requires particular attention is around the hollowing out of Norwich city centre. Research undertaken

by PRD in preparation for Norwich's 20 year growth vision illustrates significant decline in employment in the city centre between 2018 and 2022, in contrast to growth in areas of the periphery. We will work in partnership with the city, looking to attract inward investment, to try and address some of these issues.

All businesses face the challenge of becoming more sustainable and tackling industrial decarbonisation – driven by costs, supply issues and consumer demands, as well as the strong desire of Norfolk businesses to support transition.

In addition, we will support businesses to reduce their carbon emissions and move towards Net Zero which is in harmony with our Climate Strategy objectives of decarbonising our economy. This will be achieved by providing specialist Net Zero business guidance and supporting access to the finance required to implement new practices and purchase equipment that support decarbonisation plans. We also want to encourage collaboration between businesses, and the sharing of any best practice, recognising the value of peer-to-peer learning between businesses.



The Hair Hut,
Dereham

Priority 1 Actions:

- Continue and enhance activities supported by the Growth Hub, as a county-wide front door to all business support services – simplifying 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, including a review of business plans to achieve a digital audit, to help understand which digital tools should be adopted to improve services and levels of productivity.
- Provide start-up support to encourage an enterprising culture in Norfolk – including bespoke start-up support for social enterprises and CICs.
- Nurture Norfolk's scale-ups, by the right support needed to scale and develop high-growth opportunities across key sectors.
- Support businesses to embed Net Zero transition through peer-to-peer learning, sharing best practice and through individual support, such as assisting with decarbonisation plans.
- Support access to finance for SMEs, to support business growth, R&D or diversification into new services through business grant and loan programmes.
- Innovation support for SMEs to address productivity challenge and unlock funding for R&D. Support to include mentoring for innovation projects and bid writing support to access innovation funds.
- Work with partners, such as the Department for Business and Trade and the Norfolk Chambers of Commerce, to support overseas trade opportunities.

Priority 2: Support businesses to provide quality jobs, wages and conditions



We are not interested in growth for its own sake or growth where the benefits are not felt by communities in Norfolk. A thriving, growing economy is one that provides better jobs, wages and conditions.

National laws and regulations drive a significant proportion of business activity. However, we still want to help businesses to make their contribution to a more inclusive Norfolk economy. This can be achieved by developing local supply chains and retaining value within the local economy. As we grow and adapt, we need to do so in a way that invests in social capital and public good – so that private profit and public investment work together to benefit Norfolk.



Covered market, Great Yarmouth and Broadland Food Innovation Centre

Priority 2 Actions:

- Promote and support good employment practices, particularly in our foundation sectors, via a Norfolk Employment Charter
- Support to extend the culture, heritage and visitor economy season, to increase trade and provide better jobs in tourism particularly rural and coastal areas.
- Working with Market Towns groups and tourism stakeholders to promote the shoulder seasons. Introduction of shoulder season events - such as the successful Fire on the Water events in Great Yarmouth.
- Support health and social care organisations to improve the quality of jobs and working conditions in this sector – including support for career pathways.
- Create more sector specific co-working spaces, to enable business support, knowledge transfer and expansion of networks.
- Use public sector procurement opportunities to engage SMEs in bidding for contracts, to support local supply chains and retain value in the Norfolk economy.

Measures of Impact:

- Increase average wage for Norfolk
- Increase no. of business and Social Enterprise starts and 3 year survival rate
- No. of businesses and VCSEs supported and hours of support received
- Norfolk businesses supported to innovate and grow
- Increase in productivity levels GVA per hour
- No. of businesses supported to decarbonise, and sharing best practice
- No. of SME businesses supported to access public sector procurement opportunities
- Private sector finance leveraged from business grant / loan programmes

How we are supporting Norfolk's businesses



Vanilla Electronics, Thetford



Up 'N' Mellow, King's Lynn

Norfolk Growth Hub

Grants for growth

Vanilla Electronics Secured funding from the New Anglia Growth Hub for machinery to boost efficiency. The electronics company secured a grant of £40,000 which has enabled them to significantly enhance their efficiency and generate growth.

With 35,000 electronic component stock lines picked manually by staff in their warehouse, Vanilla Electronics wanted to boost efficiency by investing in new automated equipment.

The Thetford-based firm, which designs, manufactures, and distributes electronic components world-wide, has clients ranging from global players, including Siemens, to small, high-tech companies. The automated equipment can select and distribute the components, saving staff time and resources. So, Managing Director, Dan Croft approached New Anglia Growth Hub to explore funding opportunities.

Chris Sharman, a Growth Hub Business Adviser got to grips with understanding the business in-depth, identified a grant and led them through the application process.

"Chris understood our ambitions and really enabled us to understand the dynamics of the funding", said Dan, which resulted in a grant of almost £40,000. This enabled them to purchase equipment, which has helped to spark the growth of Vanilla Electronics.

High Growth and Innovation Support

Based at Norwich Research Park, Cellexcel is a spin-out from the UEA that has been recognized as a key innovator in its field. Its technology enhances the performance of highly sustainable biomaterials to increase the use of plant-based materials in manufacturing.

In recent years, Cellexcel has collaborated with the Norwich Research Park (NRP), a partnership notable for its collaborative ethos within the scientific community that will feed high-growth commercial opportunities from scientific innovations.

Tim Pryce, executive chair of Cellexcel, said: "There are major benefits to Cellexcel of working with great associates at both UEA and NRP. Firstly, they provide a great technical resource, right on our doorstep, but critically, the team at Anglia Innovation Partnership LLP –

the science park management company at Norwich Research Park that manages campus-wide initiatives – facilitated pre-seed funding that enabled us to prepare our business plans, retain talented staff and introduce key people drivers, within multi-national global businesses."

Off the back of this investment, Cellexcel recently won the Tech Innovator 2024 East of England award, as well as funded evaluation projects with global automotive companies, to move the technology from the lab to a production environment. It continues to rapidly contribute to a fast-growing sector, anticipated to be worth over £60 billion by 2029.

MENTA & BIPC

Start-up support

Norfolk Libraries Business Intellectual Property Centres have partnered with MENTA to deliver free business training programmes for existing businesses that have been in operation for less than two years and for those looking to start their own business or go self-employed.

Monique Branston is the founder of **Up 'N' Mellow**, a business started in May 2023 making a range of instant porridges that are highly nutritious, delicious and easy to prepare. Monique has attended a range of in-person and online BIPC Norfolk events, including showcasing her products at a food fair in King's Lynn Library.

"This range is innovative in that it will be the first of its kind anywhere on the market. Each porridge pot is made from all natural, plant-based ingredients with no added milk, therefore suitable for vegans or anyone with an allergy to milk/milk products."

"I attended a range of in-person and online events, including Women in Business networking sessions, Cyber Security for Business workshop, Entrepreneur in Residence talk, as well as Spotlight sessions on finding your customer, sales strategies, and using TikTok and Instagram."

"I also attended a one-to-one session on intellectual property. All these sessions have been very useful in terms of providing practical tips, advice and information needed for starting a business. In addition, through the BIPC networking sessions I have attended, I was able to meet other entrepreneurs who shared their insights and knowledge about valuable resources I have since been able to utilise to help develop my business idea."



Mill Farm Eco Barns, Winterton

Go Digital

Digital transformation support

When Emma Punchard, who runs **Mill Farm Eco Barns** in Winterton, saw the Go Digital offer, she saw the opportunity to take control of her website.

“Our priority was to make better use of our website and social media. However, despite being quite confident with digital technology, it’s often hard for the owner of a small business to know what to do first.”

The Go Digital project team selected Jim Drew to be Emma’s adviser. “His advice was amazing and I got a lot out of the audit and action plan process. Most importantly, he gave me a pathway and the confidence to rebuild my website in-house, which we are doing with support from freelancers that Jim recommended.”

Emma followed a number of Jim’s other suggestions, including using the Go Digital grant to pay for a series of ‘evergreen’ blogs for the new website. This means that blog posts will continue to be relevant and generate interest into the future. As Emma sees it, this is all part of a process of continuous improvement.

“You have to stay current to stay competitive,” she explains. “Go Digital is really useful because it gives you impartial and expert advice on where to focus your efforts. In fact, that made the advice more valuable than the grant.”

“Jim’s detailed action plan will certainly help me stay on track with my plans. I now know in which direction to go, rather than just clutching at ideas and wondering which might be best.” “I have recommended Go Digital to others for that brilliant advice - and the grant, which gives you a real incentive to act. It is a great opportunity,” she concludes, “for owners who live and breathe their business to get an external view on their digital marketing strategy.”



Tibbs Fitness, Norwich

Business Builder

Grants and Support Programme support

Brothers Josh and Luis Tibbles, owners of **Tibbs Fitness** have always worked out together and pushed each other through both fitness and business challenges.

“With Tibbs Fitness, our mission is to help as many people as we can, inspire them to take action, and improve their physical and mental health. We launched Tibbs Fitness in 2020 offering a premium gym experience, but during Covid we had to swerve into an online model and then, post-Covid, evolve back into a group facility in our unit.”

“We heard about Business Builder grant support from a gym member, and we applied to Broadland District Council for a Start Up Grant which helped us buy kit and get off the ground. Fast forward a couple of years and membership had grown 450% to 140. So, we applied for a Development Grant which was a game changer, helping us buy gym kit faster when we expanded into a larger unit. Our expansion means that we’ve also been able to build a team and employ three people.”

“The Council has been brilliant from the first contact onwards, and it’s great to know this support is there at crucial growth points. It’s a great working relationship which has made a big difference to us.”

The Councils’ team works closely with business owners to identify the optimum bespoke package. Business Builder support is offered to eligible businesses and Rural Capital Grants, Development Grants, Build-Up Grants and Foundation support is on offer to help growth and investment.

Between 2022 and 2024:

- 66 businesses in South Norfolk have had approval for grants totalling £587,000
- in Broadland District 135 businesses have been awarded a total of £706,000
- dozens of start-ups and other businesses have received advice and foundation training enabling them to launch. Following this, they applied for Build-Up Grants.

People and Skills

Norfolk residents are our future. We want to ensure that future economic growth directly benefits all our residents, reducing health inequalities and improving wages. To do this we will support all our communities, of all ages, to gain the skills they need and to access employment, across all sectors.



Priority 1: Build the workforce and talent of the future – both people entering work for the first time, or coming back to work

Norfolk's employment levels are amongst the best in the country, above those of England over the last ten years.

Employment is now back towards pre-pandemic levels. Over the last 10 years the working population of the county has increased by 6.8%. Between 2015 and 2022, Norfolk's employment base increased by 4.5%, compared with 8.4% for England.

Communities where there are lower employment levels are found across the county. Creating new, high-quality jobs in these places and ensuring access to the right skills is therefore a priority. There is strong demand for new skills in Advanced Manufacturing, Agri-Tech and Digital sectors, in addition to fast emerging demand across Norfolk's Net Zero industries, as recognised in the Local Skills Report and Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).

Across Norfolk there are major differences in healthy life expectancy. An 11.9 year gap exists between the lowest life expectancy in Norfolk and the highest. The lowest life expectancy of 72.2 years exists in Yarmouth Parade whereas Eaton has the highest life expectancy of 84.1 years.

We want to see a focus on prevention and early help as this is fundamental to tackling the root causes of poor health. Our Promoting Independence strategy articulates our vision for how public services can ensure preventative action and provide early help for people, so that those who are developing care needs can stay independent for longer and, for those living with complex needs, provide support for people to retain their independence for as long as possible.

Public Health also emphasise the importance of preventative measures to ensure positive health outcomes. Residents' ability to attain sustainable and high-quality employment will be bolstered by the promotion of prevention and positive health and wellbeing. This extends to supporting those living with mental health conditions to integrate into the workplace, with schemes such as Working Well Norfolk, the Norfolk Employment Service, and Mind's Routes Employment Service offering the services to help gain and retain employment. Norfolk is categorised as a diverse and varied economy, with no sector or industry disproportionately dominating skills demand. However, in this context we have a real opportunity to increase the number of high paid, high-quality jobs due to the high demand for new skills in sectors such as energy, ICT, creative, financial

services, construction, manufacturing and Agri-Food / Agri-Tech. We can also increase the value and quality of jobs in the visitor economy, tourism, healthcare, and education sectors by supporting upskilling and increasing demand for recruitment.

Norfolk's claimant count has historically been below the regional and national averages. It was 2.8% in April 2023, with around 15,400 people claiming benefits (principally due to unemployment). This compares with 3.0% for the East of England region and 3.9% for England. Employment recovered strongly from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Considerable employment opportunities exist in the current and proposed development of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) within the county, including the Norfolk Offshore Wind Zone, Sizewell C Nuclear Power station in Suffolk, Sheringham Shoal and Dudgeon Wind Farm Extensions.

These projects, within the energy, construction and civil engineering sectors, require substantial workforce levels across a range of higher technically skilled occupations.

Priority 1 Actions:

DEVELOP THE FUTURE WORKFORCE, WITH RELEVANT TRANSFERABLE AND WORK-READY SKILLS, IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY AND OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS

- Strengthen the work readiness and employability elements of community-based learning and training
- Encourage the continuation and expansion of programmes such as 'BOOST' (currently operating in King's Lynn and West Norfolk and Breckland) which provide opportunities for improved skills and job prospects for 16 - 30 year olds who are out of work and looking for employment.
- Support the provision of new aspirational and innovative learning sites such as The Place in Great Yarmouth, and the King's Lynn Library and Learning Centre
- Work with employers to develop skills interventions in the Digital industries, strengthening the workforce supply of software programming, coding and data analysis skills.
- Use the Adult Skills Budget to address skills gaps for employers and enhance the skills of people entering the labour market or returning to work.
- Increase employment related training opportunities for young people, including work readiness, resilience and mental health support.

SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYERS SEEKING TO HIRE NEW TALENT IN HIGH QUALITY JOBS

- Bursary scheme to support re-skilling in key sectors, where there is a clear pathway to a high quality and sustainable role.
- Support the delivery of the Norfolk County Council Apprenticeships Norfolk Strategy, increasing the scale and raising the quality of Apprenticeship opportunities.

DEVELOP NEW APPROACHES TO SUPPORT HEALTH AND WELLBEING IN RELATION TO WORK, HELPING TO REDUCE INEQUALITIES IN LIFE EXPECTANCY AND WIDER HEALTH OUTCOMES

- Utilise Work Well leadership funding to develop integrated services
- Bring partners together in the Norfolk and Waveney Health and Work Strategy Group to develop solutions across health, social care, public and private businesses.
- Encourage innovative initiatives like social prescribing that enable people to take control of their health and wellbeing. Providing people with more control over their health and wellbeing is central to tackling health inequalities and will enable more people to access and maintain careers.
- Support preventative action, as outlined in our Promoting Independence strategy and through the work undertaken by Public Health, to ensure people remain healthy for as long as possible and can access and maintain careers.
- Promote mental health support to improve wellbeing, integrate people back into work and help them stay employed. Services like Working Well Norfolk provide support for those living with long-term health conditions to find sustainable employment and are a valuable source for those struggling to take their first steps into employment.

RAISE AWARENESS AND ASPIRATIONS OF LOCAL CAREERS, DEVELOPING NEW PATHWAYS INTO LOCAL SECTORS, INCLUDING APPRENTICESHIPS, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR MAJOR EMPLOYERS

- Develop pre-employment/pre-apprenticeship programmes, including work experience, functional skills training and career guidance.
- Increase Education and Careers Information, Advice and Guidance provision for young adults and adult learners.
- Continue to engage all educational organisations to raise aspirations and ensure consistent and targeted careers information and advice for all young people.

Priority 2: Inspire and enable lifelong learning and workforce development

Alongside lower levels of economic inactivity and higher levels of employment than England as a whole, wages remain lower than the national average.

Median gross annual pay in Norfolk is £32,634, compared to £36,355 for the East of England and £35,100 for England. Norfolk's lower earnings are intrinsically linked to lower qualification levels, and we have more jobs than the national average in lower skilled, lower paid occupations.

In employment terms, the most significant industry sector in Norfolk is the Culture, Heritage and Visitor Economy, followed by Health and then Advanced Manufacturing. We need to work to improve job quality across our sectors and to increase the number of high paid and high skilled jobs, based on strong demand in our higher value sectors. There is the opportunity to work with industry and educational providers to be strategic around workforce development into, and life-long learning within, these key sectors.

We have fewer people qualified to degree level and more people with no qualifications compared to similar

regions and England as a whole. 182,400 (33.1%) of the working age population is qualified to level 4+ compared to the national average of 43.2% with large variation in skills and qualifications attainment from one district to another. While 47% of residents in South Norfolk hold degree level qualifications, only 18% hold the equivalent in Great Yarmouth. This compares to 39% in the East of England and 43% in England.

The Norfolk workforce is also lower qualified compared to both regional and national averages in two other key qualification measures:



31.91%
LEVEL 4+ QUALIFICATION AND ENTRY TO HIGHER TECHNICAL AND MANAGERIAL ROLES vs 42.01% nationally

- Level 4+ qualification and entry to higher technical and managerial roles, 31.91% of the Norfolk workforce hold this level of qualification compared to 42.01% nationally.
- 7% of the Norfolk population have no qualifications or are low qualified at level 1 only. The proportion of residents holding no qualifications is highest in Great Yarmouth (11%) compared to a much lower level in South Norfolk (4%). These rates compare to 6% in the East of England and 6% in England. The proportion of Norfolk's 16 and 17-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is 3.8%, compared with 3.1% for the East of England region and 2.8% for England.

Assessing the rate of digitalisation, automation and increasing technical skills demand of the Norfolk economy, these are significant drivers to raising access to training for the workforce and increasing pathways to higher skilled levels. The opportunity of AI in the workplace could create possibilities for improved productivity and staff retraining into higher roles. Funding and facilitation of adult education and workplace training will be essential to adapt to the reality of workplace digitisation.

Priority 2 Actions:

UPSKILL THE WORKFORCE TO GROW THE ECONOMY, DRIVE PRODUCTIVITY AND INCREASE EARNINGS

- Promote training pathways for business and new upskilling opportunities
- Work with Higher Education providers including the University of East Anglia (which hosts the Norfolk Initiative for Coastal and Rural Health Equalities) and the College of West Anglia (with their School of Nursing) to build up a pipeline of skilled workers (such as dentists and nurses) needed in the Health and Social Care sector.
- Increase the number of businesses accessing existing interventions, including Apprenticeships Norfolk and other schemes provided by Norfolk County Council and partner organisations.
- Deliver tailored skills audits for SMEs, opening up access to financial support for employee training.
- We will support technical skills pathways with new bespoke opportunities for employers.

SUPPORT RESIDENTS FROM VULNERABLE GROUPS AND THOSE FACING OTHER BARRIERS TO WORK TO GAIN OR RETAIN EMPLOYMENT

- Deliver local learning opportunities in our most deprived communities with low employment and low skills using adult skills funding.
- Ensure that employability support programmes address health and wellbeing, including how to maintain positive mental health. This will improve resilience and reduce health inequalities.
- Encourage the adoption by employers and educational establishments of carer friendly practices and support. Measures are outlined in the Carers Charter (produced by carers and Norfolk County Council) which seek to enable carers to maintain careers, remain in education or pursue training in combination with their caring responsibilities.

ADAPTING SERVICES AND PLACES TO SUPPORT OUR AGEING POPULATION, WHILE ENABLING AGEING WORKERS TO MENTOR OTHERS AND CONTRIBUTE

Norfolk's population is older than the England average, with 25% of the population aged 65+ compared to 19% for England as a whole. Driven by inward migration of retirees attracted by the high quality of life and a loss of working age population, this creates a significant demographic challenge from an economic perspective as well as certain opportunities.

For example:

- Promoting inclusive employment practices for older residents, including supporting retraining and re-skilling.
- Mentoring programmes to leverage the skills and experience of the retired population to enable mentoring support for the young and the championing of entrepreneurialism to that generation.

Priority 3: Equip and future proof our workforce to be able to take advantage of green and digital skills and opportunities

Our strengths in clean energy, FinTech and Agri-Tech / Agri-Food mean that we face even stronger demand than other parts of the country for new skills and staff in these growth sectors. These sectors are seeking a digitally skilled workforce, with the technical ability to adapt further as technology continues to evolve.

Large numbers of firms also need people who understand the opportunities of the rapidly growing environmental economy. This includes firms not only in the clean energy sector, but also those providing the new and more sustainable services and products in the construction, engineering, food and culture, heritage and tourism sectors. We also need to help our businesses increase their ability to absorb new skills and use them as effectively as possible.

Many more sectors now need STEM related skills and the ability to use technology in new ways, including our creative and culture businesses.

We have a huge opportunity to create new opportunities for local residents, but to do so we need to ensure that the opportunities to develop these kinds of skills and to retain them over the long term are accessible.



East Game Anglia

Priority 3 Actions:

INCREASE DIGITAL, AUTOMATION AND STEM RELATED SKILLS AND THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

- Expand our STEM skills network
- Ensure continued collaboration with the University of East Anglia and Norwich University of the Arts. This will enable awareness of technological innovations and opportunities and place us in a position to support businesses to capitalise on them.
- Support local businesses of all kinds to adopt new technology and develop the digital skills of their employees (e.g. Go Digital / Google Digital Garage)
- Working with businesses and skills providers to identify and respond to the skills shifts needed to harness the rapid changes happening in AI and automation.
- Promote the skills provision needed to underpin further electrification of the economy and transport.

DEVELOP AWARENESS OF THE GREEN SKILLS OPPORTUNITY AND INCREASE LOCAL PROVISION TO RESPOND, SUPPORTING TRANSITION TO NET ZERO

- Establish the feasibility of a sustainable Net Zero academy or green skills network, developing new skills provision and infrastructure across the county, linked to relevant employers
- Stimulate both supply and demand for Green Apprenticeships, with focus on opportunities directly supporting our Net Zero industries.

Priority 4: Supporting collaboration, leadership and efficient and accessible delivery in the skills system

Our county has an enviable further and higher education structure that can support the delivery of the skills system. Alongside our traditional providers, our voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE) play a core role in facilitating and delivering employment & skills services. VCSE activity provides a wide range of engagement opportunities for vulnerable communities and access to training and work opportunities.

As our institutions continue to attract national and international applicants, we will support and improve access for Norfolk residents to these institutions. This includes those from disadvantaged backgrounds which will help to drive social mobility.

OUR SKILLS SYSTEM

We are home to three further education colleges, each making an integral contribution to support the skills pipeline for Norfolk's industries:

City College Norwich (CCN) with cutting-edge digital teaching facilities.

CCN students benefit from the exceptional Digi-Tech factory, award winning Creative Arts building and recent investment in the Advanced Construction and Engineering Centre which includes industry standard electric vehicle maintenance facilities.

The College of West Anglia (CWA) with excellent health & social care teaching facilities.

CWA boasts the largest educational building in the region (The Tower Block), recently refurbished with in excess of £10m of investment and a state-of-the-art Technology Centre with facilities for engineering, electronics, carpentry, joinery, computer-aided designing and computer-aided manufacturing.

East Coast College (ECC) with superb facilities in net zero/green skills provision.

A top-ranking apprenticeship provider, ECC offers an array of subjects and technical and professional training for school

leavers and adults up to degree level. With specialist maritime, energy and offshore training centres, combined with commercial training and a partnership with University of Suffolk, the college has become a centre of excellence for energy, engineering and offshore skills training.

Norfolk is home to two universities, providing outstanding higher education opportunities for the future workforce:

The University of East Anglia (UEA).

UEA ranked in the top 25 UK's universities and world top 200. It has as global attraction with students drawn to specialisms that include computing science, computer systems engineering, business information systems, computer graphics, imaging and multimedia, data mining, engineering and environmental science. It is ideally located on the Norwich Research Park, a world-leading centre for environment, health and plant science research, and home to the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital.

Norwich University of the Arts has established itself in arts, design and media education for more than 170 years. It has a strong reputation as an innovative and creative academic community, with a firm commitment offering vocational, practice-based courses that afford students space to develop their skills and pursue their passions. Norwich University of the Arts has gained national recognition for its user experience and digital design courses and is home to the Ideas Factory incubation centre for digital creative businesses and a user experience lab.

Whilst these institutions continue to attract national and international applicants, we will continue to support and improve access for Norfolk residents including those from disadvantaged backgrounds to drive social mobility.

Our voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) groups and organisations also play a valuable role in facilitating employment & skills services, providing a wide range of engagement opportunities for vulnerable communities and in the access to and delivery of training & work provision.

The County has an active and vibrant independent training provider (ITP) network, offering a range of commercial training opportunities to the Norfolk workforce in addition to bespoke adult and young people's learning services. This network provides a strong reach into the business community to support future engagement.

Norfolk has a strengthening Skills Ecosystem through which employers, providers, the LSIP and local authorities collaborate in the identification of skills needs and the investment & development of local provision.

Priority 4 Actions:

DRIVE INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT IN PROVISION AND DELIVERY, INCLUDING IN SUPPORTING THE OUT OF WORK AND LOW QUALIFIED INTO THE LABOUR MARKET, IMPROVING SOCIAL MOBILITY

- Co-design and deliver a new programme to support economically inactive residents e.g. Universal Support
- Deliver new programmes to raise awareness of work and training opportunities across the county.
- Nurture relationship with DWP/JCP services, supporting the alignment and collaboration of employment & skills services.
- Support delivery of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) increasing business representation in sector skills groups and the Norfolk skills eco-system.
- Support our education providers to increase engagement with employers, with increased capacity to identify and respond to skills demand.
- Maximise the impact of the Skills Bootcamp programme, increasing access to training for the unemployed and in-employment career pathways.
- Further develop flexible and responsive training methods, supporting employers to upskill in line with business need.
- Support the continuing development of local skills assembly's and forums, working with Norfolk districts, boroughs and city in an intelligence led approach to skills demand.
- Retain and attract skilled graduates by creating and increasing the number of graduate roles, thus tackling graduate underemployment and risks of graduate migration.

Measures of Impact:

- Increase Adult Skills participation (aged 19+) per 100,000 population.
- Increase access to skills provision for those from the economically inactive cohort.
- Increase the proportion of the adult population (aged 16-64) achieving a level3+ qualification.
- Raise participation in learning for residents from social and skills deprived localities.
- Decrease the percentage of the population with no qualifications or have only achieved at NVQ level 1.
- Increase access and training outcomes for the Norfolk workforce (employed).
- Create graduate roles to attract skilled graduates from the county and beyond

How we are supporting skills and employment

Boost

Youth Retraining Project

The Boost project has supported over 500 young people into employment and training. Delivered in King's Lynn and Breckland and in partnership with a range of training providers, the project supports young people who are not in employment or training (NEET), or who are low skilled or in jobs without having had prior training. The delivery of the programme facilitates local job opportunities and accessible training. Boost is expanding its delivery across West Norfolk and Breckland, with ambitious plans to support young people in other areas across the county.



Apprenticeships Norfolk

The Apprenticeships Norfolk service offers a free, impartial brokerage service to businesses (of any size and in any sector) in Norfolk, to start an apprenticeship scheme in their organisation.

Since 2020, Apprenticeships Norfolk has secured approximately £2.5m of external funding to deliver a range of initiatives. This includes providing enhanced practical support for SMEs, around 900 financial incentives for businesses, bursary grants for apprentices and a Levy Support Scheme (enabling unspent funds, which would otherwise be returned to HM Treasury, to be transferred to employers to fund apprenticeship training for new or existing staff).



Since April 2023, 29 large employers have pledged to share £3m of unused apprenticeship levy. Apprenticeships Norfolk has facilitated over £2.25m of transfers supporting 233 apprenticeships (from levels two to seven) in 116 businesses.

Norwich Housing

Infrastructure





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

Digital connectivity, energy and water management are vital and are big constraints on the future economy. Managing the impacts of climate change all require new investment and integration with planning for a more inclusive and resilient economy. Much of this infrastructure will be privately funded, requiring new partnerships locally and with global investors.

At the same time, reliable road and rail infrastructure has never been more important, as the movement of goods and connected supply

chains continues to increase. Working patterns have changed, providing opportunities for people to live further away from work, but still travel regularly. There is strong demand for new commercial and industrial space from a range of sectors, both in our urban and rural areas, where there is increasing scope to support business growth which requires access to reliable digital connectivity, energy, and water supplies.

Above all, the need for high quality, sustainable housing of all tenures that is connected to labour markets is fundamental to securing the future of Norfolk to which all partners aspire.

Housing and transport are absolutely core to our transition to a zero carbon, more inclusive and resilient economy and to achieving the growth that will enable it.

This strategy summarises the approach and major actions that partners have committed to. Much of the detail of housing and infrastructure plans, including housing numbers and employment land allocation, is set out in a range of other documents, including local plans, the Norfolk Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan.

All of these make a major contribution to Norfolk's clean growth and climate change goals. This economic strategy summarises major priorities and actions.

Priority 1: Ensuring the enabling infrastructure is in place to support growth across Norfolk

Housing

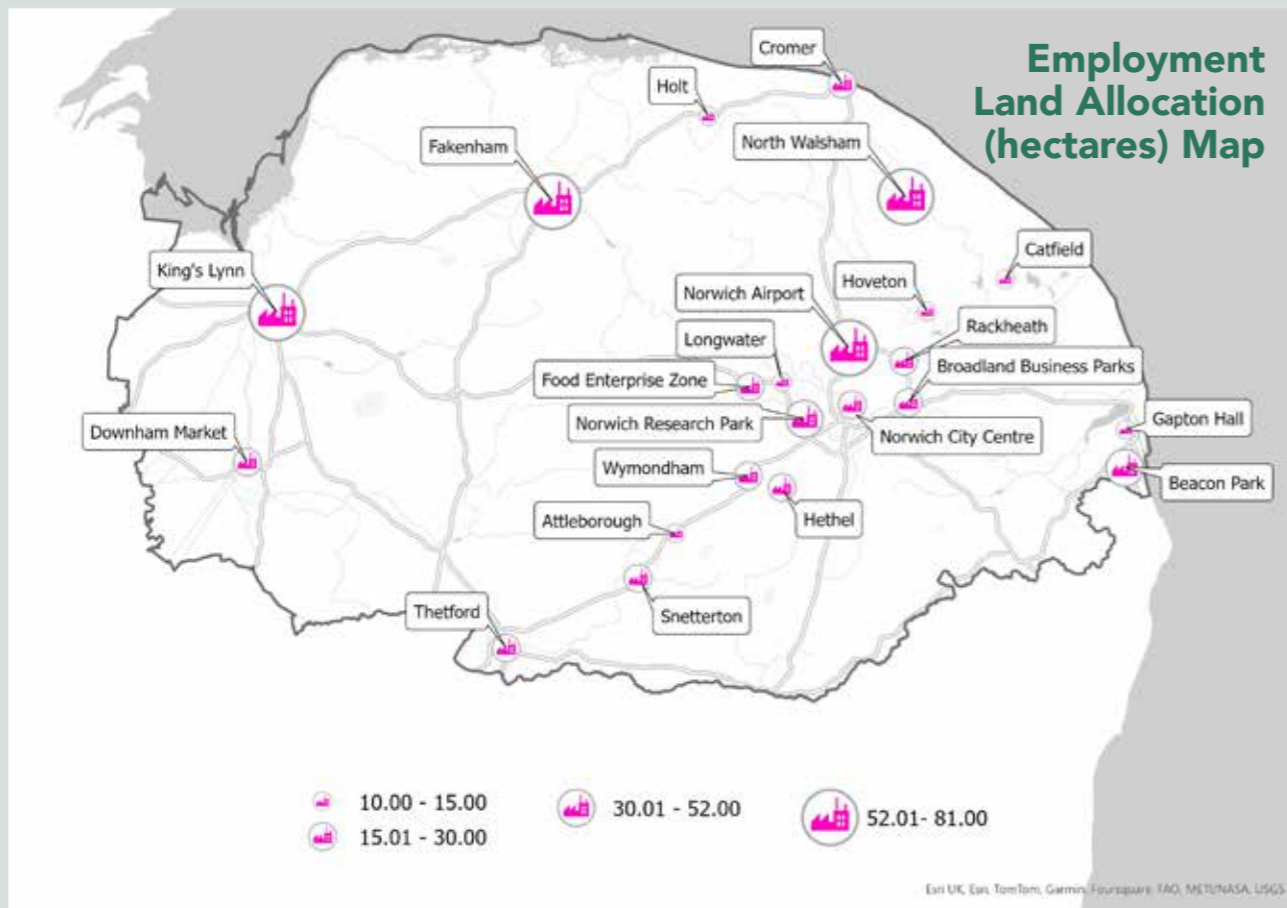
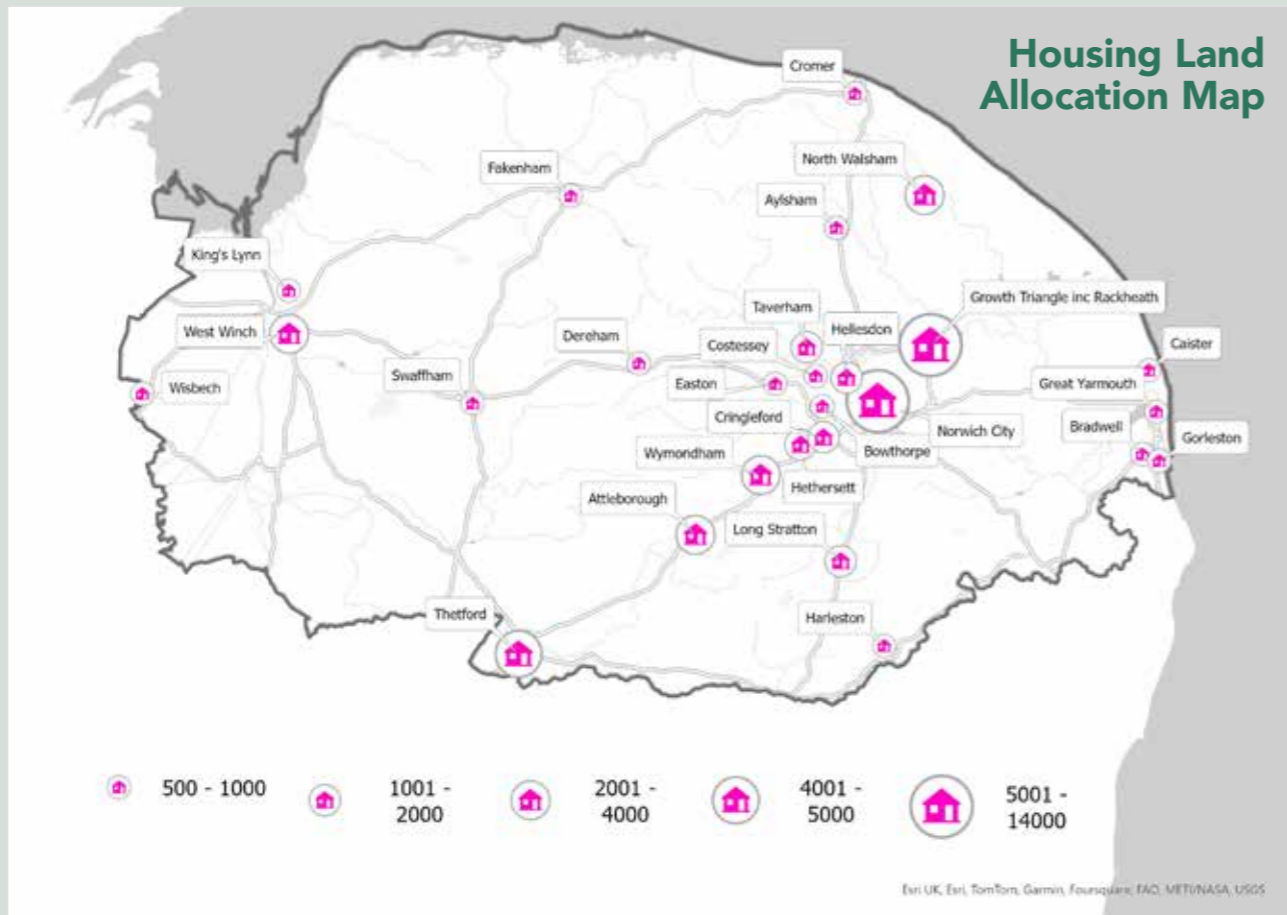
Delivering new homes, settlements and enabling infrastructure to support residents now and in the future.

Housing affordability and availability affects Norfolk's urban and rural communities in different ways. Affordability in North Norfolk, Broadland and Breckland is a particular challenge. In Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn, and Norwich, some of our most deprived communities live in poor quality housing stock that impacts wider health outcomes. Energy efficiency of our older housing stock is a major issue. There is strong demand for more housing of all types closer to our larger centres of employment, with many people facing longer and less reliable journey times than in other comparable parts of the country.

One example of a promising development which incorporates not only housing, but also an access road and amenities such as health and education facilities, is the West Winch Strategic Growth Area. Allocated within the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan, the development will result in up to 4,000 new homes. We will seek to encourage further developments such as these in appropriate places across the county.

Actions:

- **Deliver the right mix of tenures, location, quantity, and quality** of housing to meet the needs and future aspirations of our communities and to support our wider goals on biodiversity, climate change and natural capital, as well as keeping pace with targets set by central government.
- **Explore viable approaches to retrofit**, improving energy efficiency of the existing housing stock where achievable.
- Work with District Councils to **deliver over 4,023 new homes per year** across the county, as set out in their Local Plans. This will amount to over 90,000 new homes by 2036. This will build on the 39,000 homes that have been delivered since the plans began, and the 73,000 homes which have been built since 2001.
- **Tap into the opportunities to unlock development sites to meet our housing needs.** Major housing growth sites have been identified close to centres of employment and business expansion, in our market and coastal towns. This includes brownfield and grey belt sites that present the opportunity to develop more sustainably. These sites, and others like them, may require proportionate public sector intervention in certain instances, where viability gaps are created by issues such as contaminated land.
- **Support the sustainable delivery of new homes**, by ensuring that necessary infrastructure is built and available. This will include transport connections, community buildings, health facilities, green spaces, and educational infrastructure. Partnerships like the Greater Norwich Growth Board help to drive forward the delivery of strategic infrastructure projects to support the delivery of new homes.



Power

Ensuring availability, reliability and sustainability.

Although Norfolk is a leader in clean energy production due to the Clean Energy Coast, power constraints across Norfolk are holding back housing and business growth and may constrain future transport decarbonisation. We are a major generator and conduit for energy for the UK, but we are not yet getting the benefits for local businesses and people. The power shortfall will need to be addressed to enable Norfolk to deliver on its economic potential, including meeting ambitious housing growth targets.

Norfolk's three operational offshore windfarms generate 779MW of energy (enough to power 758,000 homes) and a further four windfarms are planned. These planned windfarms will have a generating capacity of 6.7 gigawatts. This is enough to power over six million homes. There are also proposals for two pylon projects in Norfolk.

Actions:

- We will develop and deliver the Resilient Whole System Energy Plan for Norfolk which will identify how to address significant challenges to growth created by power and energy capacity limits and connection constraints. We will develop long-term relationships with organisations including the National Grid, UK Power Networks (UKPN) and key stakeholders, ensuring a forward thinking, future-proofing approach to Norfolk's energy challenges.
- 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.
- Explore opportunities for community infrastructure to provide local power solutions and supplement the power needs of the wider community. One successful example, which may serve as a model to other organisations, is the solar carport at the Reef Leisure Centre in Sheringham. Most of the energy generated by the carport (approximately 75%) is utilised by the Reef's own facilities, with any excess energy being diverted back to the grid. Another transformative initiative is the Norwich Solar System project which will become the UK's largest urban solar farm.
- We will also support increases in capacity and connectivity targeted at decarbonising transport which includes supporting electric vehicles. This will also support further residential and employment space growth.

Water

Developing the water infrastructure and management approaches we need to secure supplies.

Norfolk is one of the driest counties in the UK and the increasing effects of climate change will continue to impact future water supply. Improving water quality is also a major priority. We need to adapt to climate change and invest in increasing water availability and quality as well as reduce our demand for water through water efficiency measures. Flood resilience and flood water management is also going to be continuing to grow in importance.

Actions:

- 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. The plan focuses on leakage reduction, smart metering, and reducing usage.
- The Fens Reservoir will be progressed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). It is due to be constructed in Cambridgeshire but will have major benefits for Norfolk.
- We will establish a new Norfolk Water Fund and, as part of The Norfolk Water Strategy Programme, develop a partnership between Norfolk County Council, Water Resources East, Anglian Water, and The Nature Conservancy. This will focus on implementing nature-based solutions to improve water quantity and quality in the Wensum, Bure, Ant, and Yare catchments.
- We will deliver the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance's priorities, working to enable countywide responses to flooding across all agencies involved.

Community and Green Infrastructure

Providing the community buildings and spaces to promote high quality of life across Norfolk.

Norfolk is host to a range of community infrastructure assets from sports and physical activity facilities to community buildings such as libraries, village halls, town halls and community centres.

We are proud of the wealth of Green Infrastructure assets across Norfolk, and our network of connected and multi-functional green spaces. Green Infrastructure includes all forms of green spaces such as parks, natural open spaces, allotments, and recreation grounds, and also includes Blue Infrastructure such as rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands, and floodplains.

Both these infrastructure types are essential to enhancing residents' sense of pride in their local communities and integral to good place making. Improving these assets is proven to offer significant benefits for health and wellbeing, as well as making Norfolk a great place to work and live which will in turn boost productivity and foster economic growth.

Actions:

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Support the delivery of new facilities to ensure that as new communities emerge and grow, they have the facilities that they need to provide a high quality of life, such as new community infrastructure in the North Norwich Growth Triangle. This will help attract new workers to the region.
- Work with partners who want to provide community spaces which offer shared facilities, such as multidisciplinary and outreach services such as the Mind Hub in Dereham and Multi-user Community Hub in King's Lynn.
- Encourage the creation of spaces which support and encourage our residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles, such as supporting a Marmot Places approaches in King's Lynn. This also supports preventative methods to address the county's health inequalities.
- Encourage diversification of the use of existing community buildings, helping to safeguard their future financial viability, particularly in rural locations where access to wider ranges of services and facilities is limited.

PUBLIC REALM

- Enhancing public realm through wider regeneration projects, such as East Norwich, Kings Lynn Southgates Masterplan, Great Yarmouth North Quay and Diss Waveney Quarter.
- Using traffic management to boost the economic vibrancy and vitality of the centres of cities and market towns by removing through-traffic to enable the streets and spaces to be attractively redesigned. For example, the Long Stratton High Street following the construction of the bypass.
- Supporting projects that improve conditions for sustainable and active travel, such as the Nar Ouse Active Travel Hub.
- Champion targeted place-based interventions to ensure that our communities are not left behind by the growth and economic opportunities that occur around them, such as public realm enhancements in Watton Middle Street and Swaffham Heritage Action Zone.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Support businesses to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain, and contribute to Norfolk's Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and other biodiversity enhancements.
- Encourage projects that use nature-based solutions to resolve risks and issues, such as the creation of flood defences by planting new vegetation, as an alternative to the use of hard infrastructure such as flood gates as well as bringing in more wildlife, for example Boal Quay and the Nar Loop Wetland Habitat Flood Defences in King's Lynn
- Support resident's access and connectivity to and between key Green Infrastructure sites across Norfolk, such as supporting Norfolk Trails, which will also provide support for Norfolk's visitor economy.
- Encourage new publicly accessible green spaces and maintaining access to existing green spaces, while protecting these spaces for the benefit of people and nature such as Sweetbriar Marshes and Wendling Beck
- Influence and inform good practice in planning to encourage positive decision making around the delivery of Green Infrastructure alongside new development.

Digital

We will continue to develop digital connectivity across Norfolk, including targeting cold spots and enhancing 5G coverage.

It has been showcased throughout the strategy that Norfolk is a wonderful place to live, work and set up a business. Notwithstanding the rural nature of the county, broadband availability is good with superfast levels of coverage at 97.4%. However, there is room for improvement. In addition to some cold spots, we currently lag behind national averages for ultrafast broadband coverage (58.7% against the national average of 83.3%). Addressing these challenges will ensure that people and businesses in Norfolk are not only able to maintain pace with the digital economy and thrive in this technological era, but also to take advantage of Norfolk's wonderful location while staying digitally connected.

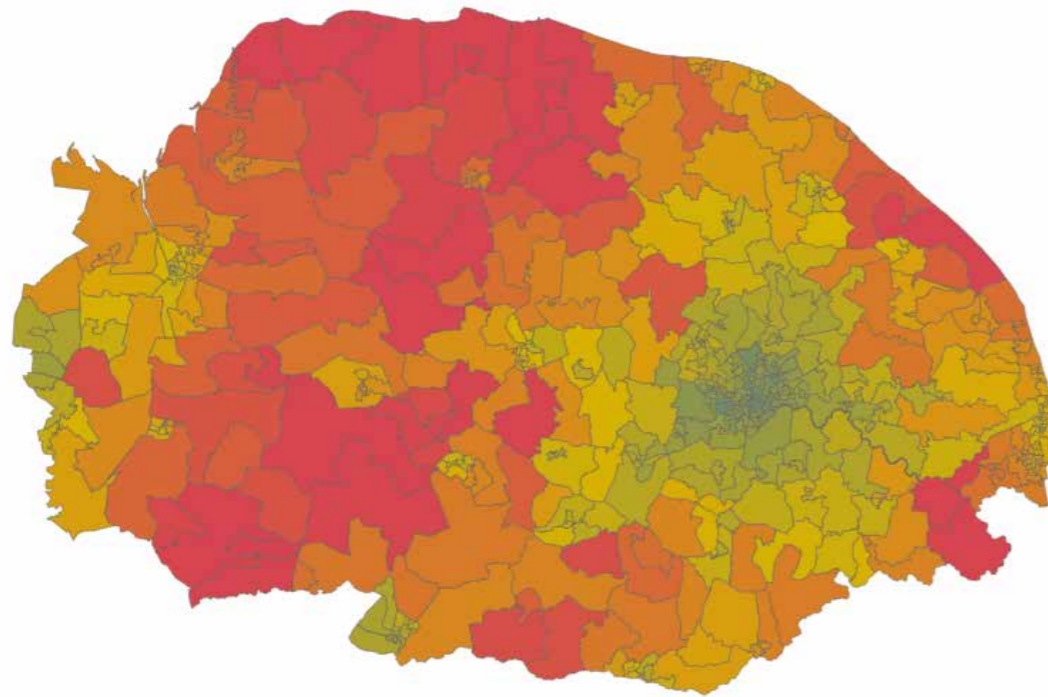
Actions:

- We will deliver central Government investment of well over £100m to improve Gigabit fibre broadband across the county in a programme commencing in 2024.
- We will work with providers and national Government to seek to improve mobile coverage in rural areas and mobile internet access, where current national programmes have not made as much progress as intended.
- Strive to eliminate remaining cold spots within the county to ensure that every person and business, whether in an urban area, the countryside or a coastal location, has access to reliable digital connectivity.



A representation of the transformation to take place in the historic Southgates area of King's Lynn

Map showing average journey time by public transport/walking



The map illustrates the average journey time in minutes to a large employment centres (5000 or more jobs) by LSOA by walking or public transport. Red areas indicate a longer journey time on average, green areas indicate a shorter journey time.

Source: Department for Transport, Journey Time Statistics (2019)

Case Study Long Stratton

The delivery of major infrastructure requires a coordinated approach. This approach was followed in Long Stratton with the district council, county council, developers and land agent working together to meet a mutual goal. The coordinated approach to the Long Stratton development has ensured that infrastructure is delivered in the right places to benefit current and new Norfolk residents. A major part of the Long Stratton development is the bypass currently under construction which has been funded by a variety of sources including the Greater Norwich Growth Board and the Department for Transport (DfT). The Long Stratton Bypass has unlocked land to deliver (with planning permission) at least 1,875 new homes, a new primary school, employment land, community facilities, and open space provision.



Priority 2: Improving transport connectivity

Improving the reliability of our transport network across all modes is central to improving productivity and growth. Norfolk has suffered from an infrastructure deficit over the years, largely due to its rurality and location.

Over recent years we have been successful in attracting Government investment in major schemes, but more still needs to be done so that Norfolk can reach its potential.

The county is one of the largest in the country and has a dated rail network, only two strategic trunk roads (A11 and A47) of which only one is fully dualled, no motorways and multiple small rural roads. There are also large areas which suffer from limited or no public transport options.

Compared with the East of England region and nationally, average journey times to centres of employment (of 5000 or more employees) are higher in Norfolk. The map on shown on this page illustrates the issues around public transport connectivity, and highlights the disparity between rural and urban areas.

Norwich and surrounding areas are well connected to employment centres, but congestion can create unreliable and longer journey times. Parts of North and West Norfolk are over an hour, on average, by car from their nearest largest centre. The most secluded areas of the county from centres of employment are Wells-next-the-Sea and its environs. Our market towns serve large rural areas, with longer than average travel times to services such as primary schools, secondary schools, further

education, GPs, hospitals, food stores and town centres. This is illustrated by North Norfolk residents having the highest average journey times across all modes of transport to access key services. Isolation and the lack of access to skills, employment and services is a real issue in many of our rural communities.

Developing our transport system is also crucial to meeting our climate change and net zero goals.

Transport, accounting for 26% of Norfolk's emissions, is the single largest contributor to Norfolk's carbon emissions. Of the emissions emanating from transport, 92% are from road vehicles and a significant proportion of this arises from journeys of over ten miles. Therefore, improving public transport, decarbonising freight and logistics, alongside undertaking major transport schemes and network improvement in our market towns is key to both better connecting residents with services and employment and reducing our carbon impact. More detailed transport actions are set out elsewhere, including the Norfolk Local Transport Plan, Transport for Norwich Strategy, Great Yarmouth Transport Strategy, King's Lynn Transport Strategy and Market Town Network Improvement Strategies.

Norfolk has in recent years secured investment to deliver large transport projects including the opening of the new Broadland Northway (A1270) north of Norwich and Herring Bridge in Great Yarmouth. More detailed transport actions are set out in a number of documents, including the Norfolk Local Transport Plan, and Transport for Norwich, Great Yarmouth Transport Strategy, King's Lynn Transport Strategy and Market Town Network Improvement Strategies. This strategy provides a summary of the actions partners will take.

Other investments in public transport schemes have also proven highly effective. The Government's £2 bus fare cap scheme has contributed to our efforts to make public transport more accessible and to reduce the county's carbon footprint.

Alongside this, interventions like the Norfolk Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) will enable us to work with our partners to increase the accessibility of public transport whilst investing in sustainability-led interventions, such as the electrification of public transport. We recognise our challenges but will continue to connect all parts of the county and work with the Government to improve fares, services and infrastructure.

Priority 2: Action

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 INCLUDING:

- Delivering the Bus Service Improvement Plan across Norfolk. This will deliver more frequent services and improvements to bus stops and stations.
- Connecting public transport between residential areas and hubs of economic activity. For example, public transport connectivity between Wymondham Railway Station to Norwich Research Park.
- Securing funding for active travel improvements, both in terms of infrastructure and through other measures which encourage behaviour change.
- Developing major employment and housing sites so that they are integrated into the transport network in a way which supports multi-modal travel (whether by public transport, active travel or car club vehicles) and utilises new transport hubs (where multiple modes of transport are provided at a single location).
- Continuing to collaborate with partners to address road safety, and to use a safe systems approach, which aims to reduce the rate of casualties who are killed or seriously injured.
- Building on recent successes such as the arrival of 70 electric buses in Norwich in March 2024, representing an investment of around £37.2m. This comprised £14.7m of Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) Government funding, bid for and won by Norfolk County Council and First Bus, and a further capital investment of £22.5m from First. As part of the project, First Bus also converted their Roundtree Way Depot in Norwich to an all-electric depot.
- Building on the success of Beryl in Norwich. Beryl offers users both pedal bikes, e-bikes and e-scooters as part of the scheme.
- Delivering Norfolk's Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans to enable increased levels of cycling, walking, and wheeling (using a wheelchair or mobility aid) across the county.
- Delivering priority projects from our Transport for Norwich Strategy and Market Town Network Improvement Strategies, as well as from key programmes such as the Transforming Cities Fund programme.
- Supporting the decarbonisation of the transport network through a range of measures. For example, supporting business to make low emission deliveries using electric vehicles and/or e-cargo bikes, and supporting residents to switch to lower carbon travel.
- Recognising the challenges for decarbonised fleets to operate routes across longer distances, and therefore supporting the development of a sustainable green infrastructure system across all of Norfolk.
- Improving the resilience of the transport network to climate change and prioritising action in critical areas of the network.
- We will also aim to secure funding in order to provide a resilient and well-adapted transport network across the county.
- Using new and innovative technology to collect data about the network, increasing our evidence base and using this to make informed decisions.

WE WILL PRIORITISE DELIVERY AND DEVELOPMENT OF MAJOR TRANSPORT PROJECTS, INCLUDING:

- A47 Easton to Tuddenham, Thickthorn Roundabout, Blofield to Burlingham and Great Yarmouth Junctions and further in the future the Acle Straight, Tilney to East Winch.
- The A11 Thetford and Barton Mills Junctions which are situated along the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor.
- A key ambition is the dualling of the A47, campaigned for by the A47 Alliance (a strategic partnership of local authorities and businesses) to improve the conditions, safety and journey times on one of the main roads in the county.
- Further improvements are also needed on the Major Road Network along the A10, A134, A140 and A146 and a much-needed extension of the A1270 to meet the A47 via the Norwich Western Link.
- A10 West Winch Housing Access Road
- King's Lynn Sustainable Transport and Regeneration Scheme (STARs), including the transformation of the historic Southgates area.
- A140 Long Stratton Bypass
- Enhancements to the rail network are required. These include upgrades at Ely and Trowse, development of East West Rail and station accessibility improvements at Wymondham, Great Yarmouth and Thetford. Further projects can be found in the Norfolk Rail Prospectus.
- Priorities within the Norfolk Electric Vehicle Strategy including accelerating charge point deployment (and securing funding to do this), collaborating with District, City and Borough council partners across Norfolk via an Electric Vehicle forum exploring wider measures (in addition to charge point infrastructure) to increase the uptake of electric vehicles amongst residents, visitors, businesses and County Council employees.



How we are enabling infrastructure

River Wensum,
Norwich

Greater Norwich Growth Board

Norfolk currently benefits from a unique and exemplar partnership arrangement between Norfolk County Council, Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils and Norwich City Council called the Greater Norwich Growth Board.

The partnership pools their skills, influence, and funding to accelerate the delivery of strategic infrastructure across their joint area. This has resulted in the delivery of key infrastructure that otherwise may not have been able to be funded such as the Broadland Country Park and A1270 Broadland Northway.

Norfolk Water Fund

The Norfolk Water Strategy Programme is a partnership between Norfolk County Council (NCC), Water Resources East, Anglian Water and The Nature Conservancy.

It focuses on implementing nature-based solutions to improve water quantity and quality in the Wensum, Bure, Ant, and Yare catchments. The Norfolk Water Fund will be established, the first of its kind in the UK. Water Funds enhance financial and governance mechanisms which unite public, private and society stakeholders around a common goal to contribute to water security through nature-based solutions.

River Wensum, Norwich

Climate change



Climate change and protecting our environment

The natural environment is central to Norfolk's history, culture and economy. Our communities and businesses are rooted in their localities, often with long history and deep expertise relating to the natural world.

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 are all illustrations of the natural assets and talent we have in interacting with our natural resources and world.

Norfolk is playing a vital role in securing the UK's successful transition to a low carbon economy and to help it adapt to climate change. At the same time, Norfolk has

many local challenges to face and overcome as our climate changes and environmental pressures intensify. The opportunity for us, that runs throughout this strategy, is to use the skills and expertise we have 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.

Some of the following businesses illustrate Norfolk's potential in environmental sustainability and clean energy innovation:

- Thetford-based Warren Services has launched a new laser cell which enhances operational efficiency and reduces carbon emissions. The company's largest single investment of £1.5m, which was enabled by a £100,000 grant from Norfolk County Council's Business Transition to Net Zero (BTZN) programme, exemplifies Norfolk's growing potential in innovative, sustainable engineering.

- Holkham Estate - a finalist in the 2023 Environmental and Sustainability Awards - is a successful model of sustainable agriculture and low-carbon estate management. It uses techniques such as ground and air source heat pumps and solar installations to maximise food production and biodiversity which are vital for climate resilience.

- Delta Fire, a leading Norfolk-based manufacturer of firefighting equipment, demonstrates a strong commitment to reducing carbon emissions and promoting sustainability. Prioritising energy efficiency and the use of sustainable materials in its manufacturing processes, the company minimises environmental impact whilst creating high performance products, setting a standard for green practices in the firefighting industry.

- Great Yarmouth-based deep geothermal delivery specialist CeraPhi Energy is revolutionising the energy sector by developing nearly 1.2GW of heat, cooling, and power projects, with an additional 1.8GW under appraisal. CeraPhi's patented solutions transform oil and gas wells into limitless green energy sources, addressing climate impacts and promoting a greener future.

In addition to the innovation and leadership undertaken by our businesses, we need to find ways to support our SME's to decarbonise their existing operations. This may include utilising existing technologies, or convening opportunities for businesses to collaborate and share best practice.

Skills relating to the transition to a lower carbon and more sustainable future are increasingly in demand across a whole range of industries. By fostering innovation and efficiency, green jobs not only address climate change but also create economic opportunities and resilience. Investing in these skills equips the workforce to meet the demands of a growing green economy, ensuring environmental sustainability and long-term economic growth.

Achieving this will mean embedding new approaches in almost everything we do. This includes securing major investment into the Norwich Research Park, increasing commercialisation of research and innovation, supporting businesses to adapt, changing how we build, learning from world-class examples (like the Enterprise Centre at the University of East Anglia), investing in local energy networks and new public transport (resembling our partnership with First Bus to deliver 70 electric buses) and developing new skills and provision.

Local partnerships can be cultivated with experts in the field. Norfolk is home to one of the UK's Tyndall Centres, an innovative faculty within the University of East Anglia, that brings together researchers from the social and natural sciences and engineering to develop sustainable responses to climate change.

Climate change is already affecting our communities and infrastructure. We are highly susceptible to coastal erosion as seen at Hemsby and along the North Norfolk Coast. We are also seeing the effects of increased drought and flooding caused by more frequent extreme weather events.

As emissions linger in the atmosphere (for potentially hundreds of years), our climate will continue to change regardless of the preventive and mitigative actions we now take. This will require us to explore ways of adapting to ensure resilience within our communities and economy. There are four types of adaptive actions that we will consider. These are infrastructural, institutional, behavioural and nature-based. Practical examples of these adaptive actions could include building seawalls or inland flood defences, providing building insurance schemes, changing crop planting times and varieties and installing green roofs or spaces. Retrofitting homes (so they are warm in winter but cool in summer) is another adaptive measure with the potential to alleviate seasonal pressures on health and social care.

Withstanding extreme weather and adapting to climate variability requires an integrated approach to infrastructure and development. Existing infrastructure needs to withstand extreme weather events through improvements such as storm-

resistant designs and retrofitting buildings to meet updated climate standards. While new infrastructure must involve strategic planning and design such as elevation and climate-smart zoning to avoid high-risk areas to future climatic events.

The Enterprise Centre at the University of East Anglia is one of the UK's greenest buildings. It features exemplar sustainable design aspects including renewable energy systems, efficient use water systems and building elevation to safeguard against potential flooding. This exemplifies a comprehensive and implementable climate-resilient design.



Hunstanton



The Reef Leisure Centre, Sheringham



Herring Bridge, Great Yarmouth

CONNECTING NORFOLK

Being a large, rural county means that a good road network is vital for connecting Norfolk's communities and businesses. However, transport also represents nearly a quarter of Norfolk's carbon footprint. We need to ensure that we keep Norfolk connected while pursuing decarbonisation by supporting the transition to electric vehicles, improving the county's public transport, and encouraging more sustainable and active travel.

Designing, building, and managing infrastructure systems in a way that reduces negative environmental impacts while supporting long-term economic growth and social equity, will be key.

Only by preparing for the coming changes can our people, economy and natural environment be protected and adapt in ways that can unlock new opportunities.

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

All the actions in this strategy are designed and will be delivered in ways that work to meet these objectives. To achieve what is needed we must take a fully integrated approach. There are several plans and actions which meaningfully support our climate change and natural capital goals.

Reducing negative environmental impacts while supporting long-term economic growth

Action

We will:

- Deliver the Norfolk Climate Strategy (implemented through the climate action plan) and develop a new environmental strategy (due to be released in 2025) to support Norfolk's transition to become a greener and more resilient county enabling residents to benefit from an enhanced environment and quality of life.
- Deliver the emerging Local Nature Recovery strategy. This sets out a comprehensive plan for restoring and enhancing biodiversity and natural habitats across Norfolk and Suffolk. It will be achieved by mapping habitat and opportunity areas and developing biodiversity priorities to safeguard ecological resilience to extreme weather events.
- Through the Norfolk Flood Alliance, we will work to ensure Norfolk communities and infrastructure are safer and more resilient to the risks of inland and coastal flooding and better placed to ensure adequate water supplies during droughts. Work is already underway on numerous sites.
- Support industries to decarbonise, such as Agri-Food and land management through an Agri-Food industrial decarbonisation strategy and in the offshore wind sector through the Great Yarmouth operations and maintenance campus.
- Deliver the resilient whole system energy plan for Norfolk to support connectivity and capacity for business and residential development, unlock capacity to decarbonise transport and building retrofit options, and ensure infrastructure can withstand the impacts of climate change.
- Deliver the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy.
- Interventions that help the culture, heritage and visitor economy sector become more sustainable, such as supporting the development of an Electric Vehicle network around tourist hotspots.
- Find ways to support agriculture, a significant industry for the county and the UK's fourth most significant emitter, to decarbonise. A report undertaken by NCC in 2024 in partnership with the historic LEP, UEA and Innovate UK highlighted a number of options. These included providing tailored business support for SME's, investigating if digital twinning could be used to test the viability of different interventions and leveraging the County Farms estate.

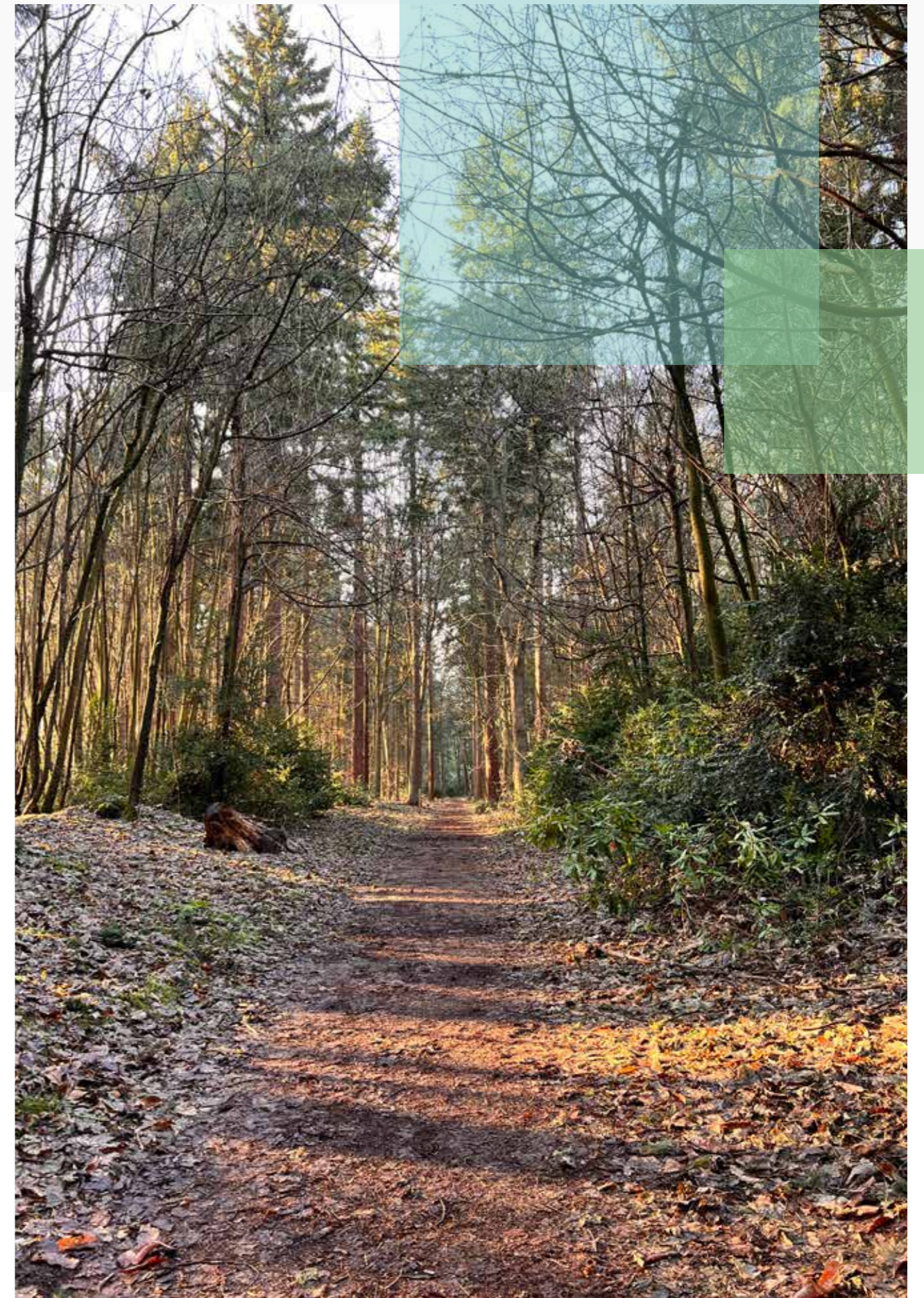
The natural environment is central to Norfolk

- **Health & wellbeing benefits** – through provision of accessible green spaces/corridors for outdoor recreation, play & active travel for all.
- **Nature recovery benefits** – through the creation, restoration and enhancement of habitats and wildlife corridors.
- **Climate change resilience benefits** – through the adoption of nature-based solutions for mitigating and adapting to the effects of a changing climate.
 - Ensure new development contributes to statutory regulations regarding biodiversity and nutrient neutrality and work to protect and enhance our existing natural capital through nature-based programmes such as at Wendling Beck.
 - Lobby for devolved agricultural funding to enable the County Council to support farmers as stewards of the environment and regenerative agriculture.

Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP)

Through the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP), Norfolk Net Zero Communities project, we will work with seven communities across the county to understand the non-technical barriers to widespread community decarbonisation and co-design solutions to these obstacles. This will reduce emissions and tackle climate change by using an approach with people and places at its core.

Prioritising renewable energy and climate-resilient design alongside principles of resource efficiency and environmental conservation in planning and development processes will be vital to this.



Lynford, Thetford

Norwich market

Place Making and Communities



Our places and communities

Norfolk has some of the most significant landscapes in the United Kingdom.

The Broads are a vital asset both for tourism and for biodiversity. Over 100 miles of coastline provides the majority of the UK's offshore wind and some of its most cherished holiday destinations and coastal towns. Our rural landscape supports both highly productive Agri-Food businesses and vital natural habitat.

We have thriving market towns and rural villages that are both historic centres and modern hubs of cultural life, business

growth and public services. Norwich is a dynamic location and while it is steeped in history with a thriving culture, heritage and visitor economy sector, it is also home to a modern centre of education, pioneering research, advanced sectors and creative industries. King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth and Thetford are other major centres, which serve as local employment service centres and as places of interest for visitors.

Our communities have a strong sense of pride of place, distinctiveness and local identity, something which has resonated strongly through extensive engagement. Many are at the forefront of changes in climate, technology and working patterns, facing both challenges and opportunities. We will continue to support and invest in our places and

the social, natural and physical capital they need to continue to thrive.

INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Similar to the rest of the UK, Norfolk has spatial disparities in terms of the outcomes and opportunities experienced by residents. Certain rural and coastal communities, market towns and urban areas have challenges relating to inequality - including access to jobs, good wages, education and training - which can influence healthy life expectancy

In spite of its strengths and assets, Norwich has significant challenges related to this agenda. It is amongst the country's 20% most unequal local authorities, with the 10th highest educational inequality rate in the country. There are some particularly acute issues around health inequality, with Norwich falling

behind other comparable cities including Cambridge, Colchester and York for life expectancy of both men and women, and with the inequality in female life expectancy having increased significantly more sharply between 2010 and 2020 than the other cities. More needs to be done to ensure that everyone in the city has the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to, and benefit from, the local economy.

This strategy provides an opportunity to refresh our approach to linking communities to jobs and skills through locally accessible infrastructure. This infrastructure includes The Place in Great Yarmouth, Thetford Skills Hub, the Advanced Construction and Engineering Centre in Norwich, serviced employment land in areas like Fakenham, Holt and North Walsham, active travel hubs and the Enterprise Park in King's Lynn.

We need to invest directly in growing social capital, and help the projects and initiatives within communities that can bring people together and improve long term outcomes.

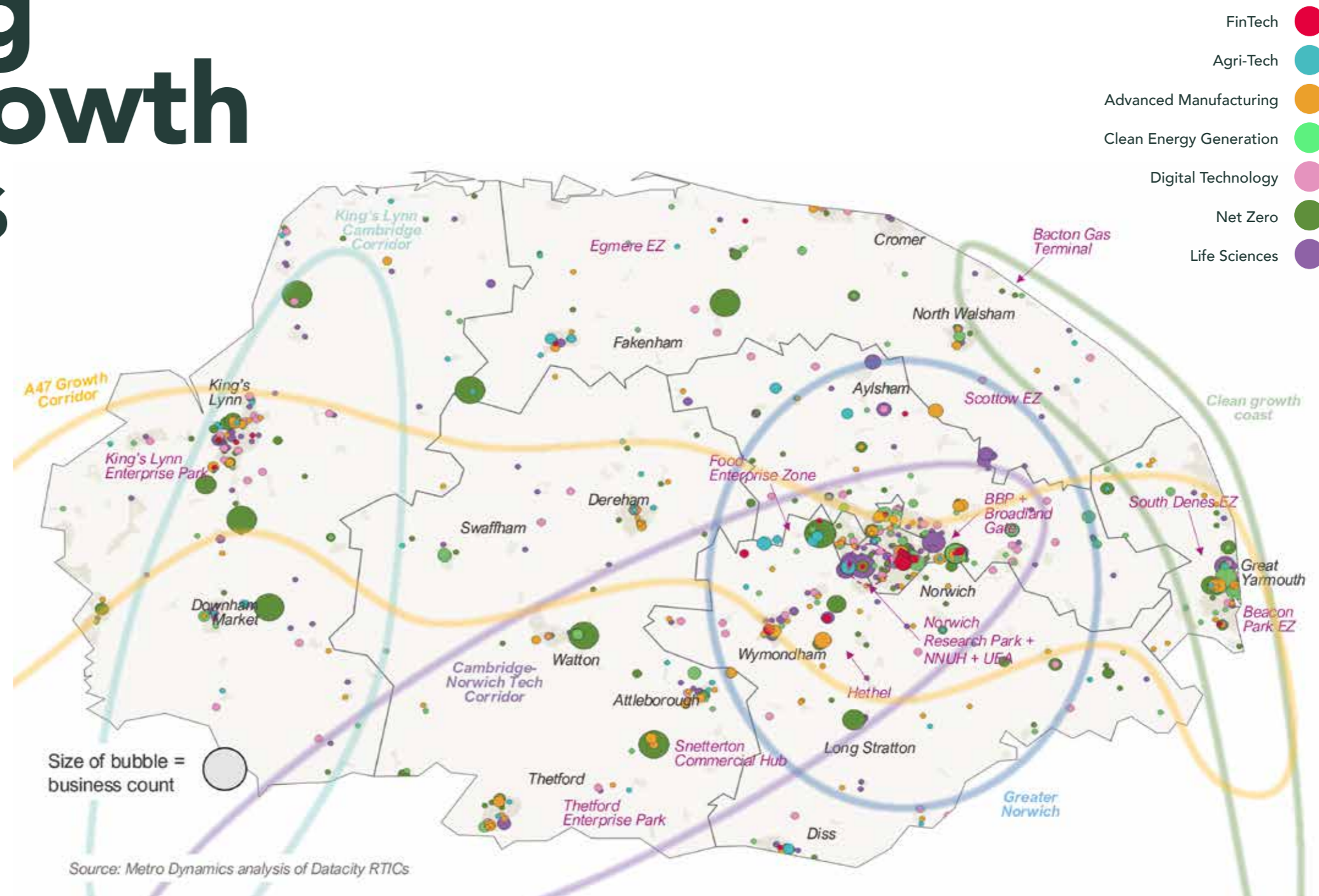
Projects such as the Link programme in Dereham and Thetford (a community hub and advice service combining VCSE and public sector agencies within a single collaborative facility), the Boost project in West Norfolk and Breckland (helping young

people into training and employment) and Tech Skills for Life (tackling digital exclusion across the county) are all examples of such projects.

In addition, we aim to directly tackle environmental and social drivers of deprivation, through targeted place-based interventions such as the North Walsham Heritage Action Zone, Hunstanton Seafront, Cromer Clifftop Gardens and Watton Middle Street.

Major urban centres powering wider growth corridors

Our larger towns and city are centres of business growth and anchor wider growth corridors which link together natural assets, major housing and employment sites, and significant travel to work areas and access to wider markets.





Norwich Castle

Greater Norwich

Norwich is a dynamic University and Cathedral city with a growing data science cluster, FinTech start-ups, well developed research and innovation ecosystems, and rich cultural and arts attractions.

Norwich plays a leading economic role in Norfolk as its most populated centre, producing the second highest GVA of the seven districts, as well as underpinning the wider economic landscape of Greater Norwich (which accounts for over half the total GVA of the whole county). However, PRD research prepared to support the development of a 20 year economic vision for Norwich demonstrates that across a number of metrics including GVA growth, employment change and office and industrial floor space change, Norwich is significantly falling behind comparable cities such as Cambridge, Ipswich and Peterborough. Interventions are urgently needed that prevent Norwich becoming a 'left behind city'.

The Norwich Research Park (NRP) is the largest concentration of food and

health-related research in Europe. Alongside its innovative research, the NRP is producing leading scale-ups and high-growth businesses, including PfbIO, Ediform, Air-seq and Tropic. These will scale the scientific advancements made at the NRP and increase scientific investment in Norfolk. Norwich hosts a vibrant cluster of digital creative businesses, and a rich ecosystem of meet-up groups catering to a range of tech and digital interests. Businesses include award-winning digital businesses such as Tech Educators, Fountain Partnership and Artlist. A key part of Norwich's ecosystem is Norwich University of the Arts, with its specialism in arts, design and media. The university is at the cutting edge of design innovation, launching innovative degree programmes such as UX design.

Norwich's cultural organisations and historic assets play a major role in making the city an outstanding place to live, work, visit and invest. An example of a dynamic historic asset is the Halls, containing part of a medieval friary complex, which is currently undergoing essential construction work and upgrades following the award of Town Deal funding. The works will transform the venue into an enhanced multi-use performance venue for concerts, trade fairs, corporate meetings, filming and weddings. The project encapsulates Norwich's unique blend of history and dynamism and illustrates how other heritage sites can continue to thrive in the twenty-first century.

At the same time, Norwich has communities that have been left behind by recent growth and face multiple challenges. Ensuring that regeneration and growth delivers for these communities is key. Changes in industries such as retail, that have been severely impacted by the shift to online shopping and other trends, mean that low-paid jobs and employment continue to be threatened with associated adverse social effects. Recognising this, the Norwich Good Economy Commission pledged to actively pursue an economy which is more inclusive and sustainable. To realise this ambition, it will be necessary to proactively seek out and nurture opportunities to create new employment and employability skills support programmes, as well as new pathways to help people back into good quality entry level roles in our major sectors.

Norwich city centre is a vibrant, dynamic centre for the county. In order to continue to thrive, the city requires further investment for regeneration, growth and the provision of adequate commercial space. This should include redeveloping redundant brownfield sites and buildings which is a sustainable way of delivering growth that simultaneously enhances quality of place.

At the same time, we will continue to support community driven programmes to encourage and enable enterprise and economic activity, such as FUSE Norwich that develops Norwich's thriving social enterprise sector, and Common Lot CIC's Skills Share Hub in Mile Cross

Norwich. Enterprises such as The Feed, a food-based community interest company, also present an alternative approach for shifting the dial on some of the most stubborn deprivation challenges.

Large-scale investment will play a role too in the regeneration of East Norwich and Anglia Square.

The East Norwich regeneration is an ambitious waterfront project to create a sustainable urban quarter for the city through the largest brownfield development in the East of England. The plans potentially include the delivery of a new high-capacity conference venue for the city. It will deliver around 4,000 new homes, 6,000 new jobs, support manufacturing, digital creative, professional services and tourism sectors and leverage substantial future investment.

Anglia Square is a significant city centre site that urgently requires investment. A solution may lie in the public sector taking a more active role in delivering a new vision for the site to promote the development of residential and commercial property in the city centre.

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.

Sectors found within the corridor include manufacturing, advanced engineering, food and life sciences. The Norwich Research Park and the engineering expertise at Lotus and Hethel are prominent parts of the corridor. The Research Park is the largest single-site concentration of research in food, health and life sciences in Europe and produces a unique mix of world-leading research. Further growth is planned at Lotus and Hethel to entrench its position as a source of engineering prowess. These plans include a technology

hub which has the potential to create over 500 additional jobs by 2026, leverage £750m of investment and safeguard the area as a centre for sports car operations. Another centre of excellence along the corridor is the Food Enterprise Park (located in Easton, just off the A47) which specialises in Agri-Food.

In addition to recent investments such as the Broadland Food Innovation Centre, the Food Enterprise Park aims to position itself as the leading site for Controlled Environment Agriculture in the world. To date £60m has been invested in sites and building facilities.

The market town of Thetford is positioned within the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor, offering easy connections to both cities, as well as numerous growth opportunities. Benefiting from a well-established manufacturing cluster and a highly skilled workforce, Thetford is positioned as an attractive destination for business expansion and innovation. The Thetford Sustainable Urban Extension is a major planned 5,000-home development and features 55 acres designated for employment sites.

Furthermore, Snetterton Business Park, strategically located on the A11 between Thetford and Attleborough, is a pivotal driver of economic development in the area. It boasts great development potential and excellent transport links



Queen's Jubilee Celebration, Downham Market



Splashpad, Gorleston-on-Sea

and attracts both local enterprises and national high-tech companies which contribute significantly to the region's economic growth.

Greatly enhancing the connectivity of the corridor and the wider region is Norwich International Airport. Not only does it enable access to more remote or distant parts of the British Isles, but it also acts as an important gateway to the continent. By facilitating international travel to destinations like Amsterdam, the airport contributes to businesses within the corridor (and further afield) being able to forge international partnerships.

Rural communities, market towns and coastal settlements

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 agricultural landscape that symbolises Norfolk's 'breadbasket' role and the rural settlements it contains are known widely for their quality of life offer.

Norfolk is predominantly rural and coastal, which poses significant challenges around access to services, employment, education and training. This strategy recognises that delivering some activity in rural and coastal areas will cost more, but understands the importance of making that investment, which has been possible through the Rural England Prosperity funding programme.

Norfolk's market towns are functional centres in the rural landscape of business, employment, culture, retail and public services. Market towns continue to adapt to changing patterns of work, shopping and leisure use, although many have been significantly impacted and would benefit from investment and support. Each faces different opportunities and challenges: for example, as traditional retail and banking uses for buildings change to residential or leisure use, as demand for housing grows and changes, and the way that health and care services are provided continues to evolve.

Projects such as the North

Walsham Heritage Action Zone demonstrate the transformational impact of public realm and high street renewal programmes. Similarly, Swaffham's High Street Heritage Action Zone programme aims to revive and champion historic high streets. It will revitalise the Swaffham high street by maximising the potential of local character and heritage assets.

While rural areas can present certain challenges for businesses, there are also numerous examples of flourishing rural enterprises. The Holkham estate, traditionally associated with agriculture, is now home to an eclectic array of rural enterprises. From unique hospitality providers and artisan food and drink businesses (including the award-winning Mrs Temple's Cheese) to firms specialising in architecture, digital and finance, the Holkham estate is a thriving seat of business activity. Illustrating this further is the presence of Monica Vinader,

an eponymous and prestigious jewellery company that crafts contemporary pieces from sustainable materials. While based in North Norfolk, there are Monica Vinader stores across the UK and products are shipped across the globe. With dynamic and successful businesses, the Holkham Estate acts not only as an exemplar to other historic sites, but also demonstrates the vitality of many of our rural enterprises.

Norfolk's sweep of coastline is home to a number of coastal communities of varying scales which function as local residential and service centres, major tourism hubs and act as stewards for the surrounding natural environment. Targeted investment – including in Great Yarmouth's historic townscape, Hunstanton's Seafront and Cromer Clifftop Gardens – is required to ensure that these communities are able to thrive.

The A47 is the main east-west route across Norfolk: it carries traffic, freight and public transport across East Anglia from the Midlands and

the north of England, catering for residents, visitors and businesses alike. The A47 Growth Corridor connects the smaller market towns of Swaffham and Dereham and the rural communities and coastal settlements of King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth with Norwich. Whilst investment has been secured for dualling some sections of the A47 within Norfolk, there is a long held aspiration for the full dualling of the road.

Rural and coastal communities are at the forefront of challenges posed by climate change, including flooding across the Broads and other vulnerable areas of the county and coastal erosion, particularly along the North Norfolk Coast. Equally, they are key to a successful transition. Whether it be the clean energy sector developing on the coast or the potential for regenerative agriculture, they have a central role to play. Partnership working with districts, the Broads Authority, and other local stakeholders will be key to creating a sustainable future for the county.



Marina Centre, Great Yarmouth



Custom House, King's Lynn

Great Yarmouth and 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.

The shallow water, deep-water ports and ideal weather conditions of the Southern North Sea offer developers and their supply chains the perfect environment for multi-billions of pounds worth of investment. Some of the world's biggest wind farms are being built off the Norfolk coastline including the Norfolk Offshore Wind Zone, in addition to four extension projects; Sheringham Shoal, Dudgeon, North Falls and Five Estuaries.

Great Yarmouth is ideally situated to capitalise on this growth and accelerate new jobs in the local supply chain, through investments in the Great Yarmouth Operations and Maintenance

Campus and further growth ambitions for the Energy Park. Facilities such as Beacon Park and the deep-water port will also help to unlock this growth.

Businesses looking for modern offices, industrial units or development land (including quayside space) can utilise Great Yarmouth. It has sites in and around the ports which aim to support the growing clusters of energy related companies.

Significant investment is driving business opportunities, including in the Offshore Wind Skills Centre, the Energy Zone (one of the most successful Enterprise Zones in the UK) and the new investment in the harbour and deep-water port. We have also been successful in securing significant Town's Fund investment from Government which has led to the major regeneration of assets in the town. Investment has breathed new life into the much-loved and historic Winter Gardens and the Place which will become a new library and university and learning centre.

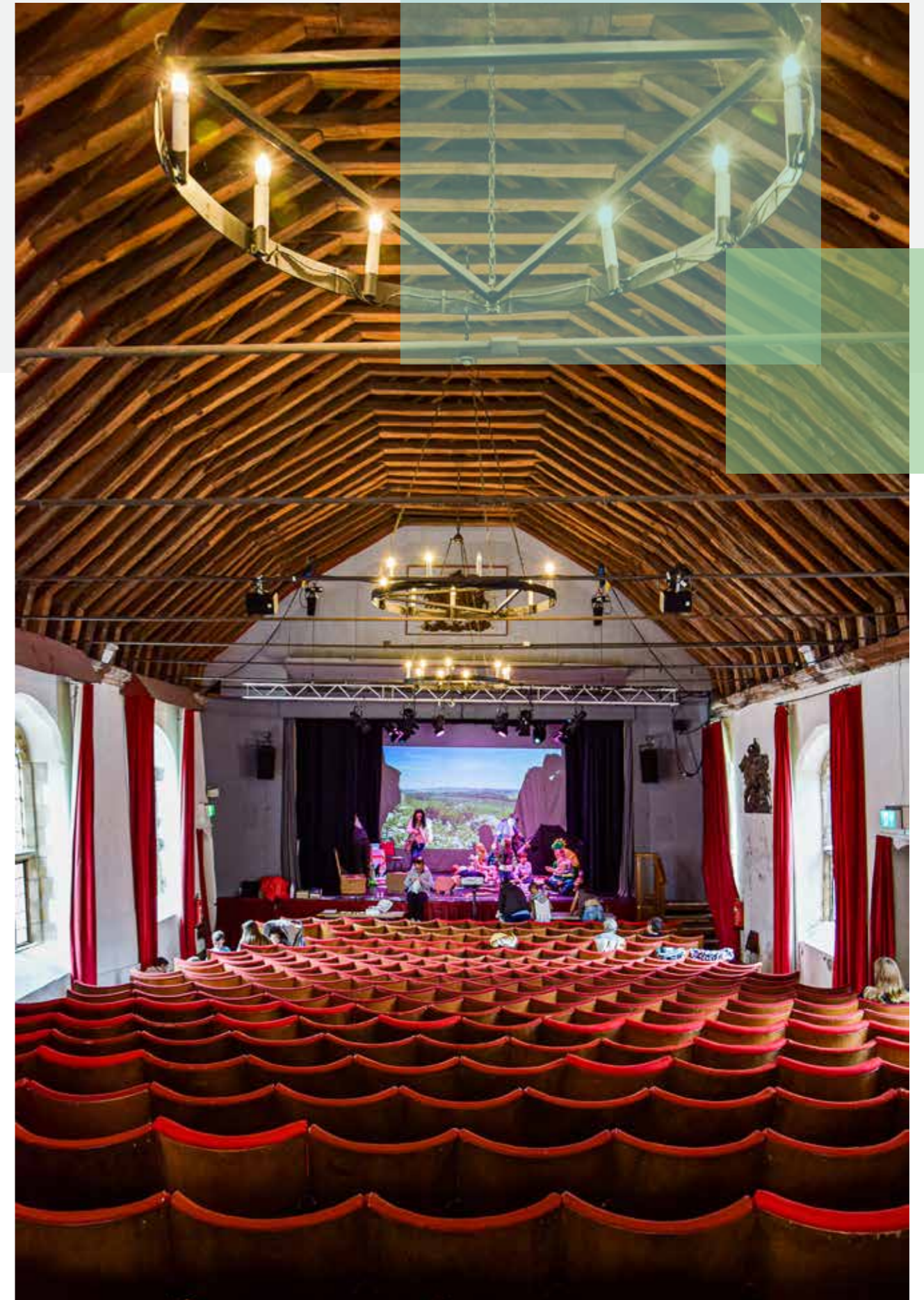
The town has many challenges, with areas of high deprivation, low skills and wages and underutilised land and assets, where values are a barrier to viable redevelopment. Long term reliance on seasonal employment in the tourism industry has contributed to embedding low aspirations and expectations. But there is significant opportunity over the long term, with partners and the community driving a significant programme of cultural, physical and business regeneration.

King's Lynn and West Norfolk

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

Local sector strengths in manufacturing activities and Agri-Food lend itself to collaboration with Cambridge's high tech, highly innovative industries, and excellent transport links between the two can promote the adoption of cutting-edge technologies and AI to boost productivity in food-tech, Agri-Tech, med-tech, and Net Zero.

The A10 and A47, along with the rail network running services typically every half an hour, enhance accessibility and make King's Lynn and West Norfolk an attractive location for businesses seeking cost-effective operations within reach of Cambridge. This will generate enterprise and high value employment for the town, by building on the King's Lynn Enterprise.



St George's Guildhall, King's Lynn

Priority 1: To support all places across Norfolk to provide a high quality of life

Supporting Rural & Coastal communities

Our rural and coastal communities face challenges in accessing services, employment, education and training. Investment and support would enable these places to better serve their communities.

Rural and coastal communities are both most impacted by and uniquely positioned to address the challenge of climate change. Projects such as Wendling Beck nature recovery programme or Norfolk Seaweed's pilot to establish a sustainable, ethical seaweed industry off the Norfolk coast for use in bio-fertilisers, bioplastics, food, nutraceuticals are examples of best practice projects in this respect.

There are challenges associated with the culture, heritage and visitor economy sector, which is a significant employer in rural and coastal areas, such as seasonality and low-paying work. Shoulder-season events such as the Out There Festival in Great Yarmouth and innovative tourism programmes such as Deep History Coast in North Norfolk show how we can successfully enhance Norfolk's offer.

Actions:

SUPPORTING RURAL AND COASTAL COMMUNITIES

- Support the Norfolk Local Visitor Economy Partnership to provide strong local leadership and governance as a destination for visitors.
- Regenerating key local assets such as Great Yarmouth's historic townscape or Cromer's Clifftop Gardens.
- Supporting sustainable rural and coastal industries, such as promoting Norfolk as a nationwide leader in regenerative agriculture.
- Supporting rural and coastal communities to transition to Net Zero and prepare for climate change, such as Coastwise in North Norfolk or agricultural water capture, storage and re-use.
- Improving rural and coastal access to services by investing locally, such as a network of rural service hubs that can be used by rotating VCSE service provision.
- Supporting communities to retain and reimagine rural infrastructure such as pubs or shops, for example Gressenhall Community Enterprise.

Supporting attractive and resilient market towns and high streets

Norfolk's market towns are vital centres of business, employment, culture, retail and public services.

Our aim is to build on recent progress and take an integrated, locally led approach (through initiatives such as town boards) that support partners to come together, agree priorities and manage investment and interventions so that they deliver what is needed in each town.

We aspire to continue investing in the revitalisation of towns and high streets, boosting cultural and economic opportunities for the communities.

Wymondham is another example of a multi-faceted approach to supporting market towns. South Norfolk Council (SNC) is collaborating with Wymondham Town Council and other key stakeholders to deliver a £1m programme aimed at enhancing Wymondham's town centre. This initiative focuses on improving the public realm, creating a vibrant environment for businesses, residents, visitors, and workers. Simultaneously, SNC is advancing the development of a 20-hectare site on the edge of Wymondham, designated for employment uses in their Local Plan.

Successful local interventions that support market towns will be developed and built on. The Love Your Market Town pilot which provided small grants to communities to deliver interventions in market towns that increase pride of place, will be built upon following initial successes. The Future Breckland Programme, which outlines a set of strategic priorities across the district's five market towns, sets an exemplary template for interventions in market towns.

We can capitalise on the trend for remote and hybrid working, encouraging more people to locate, stay and contribute to the local community and economy, such as a co-working space at Attleborough Railway Innovation Hub.

Culture-led events, programmes and organisations are vital in securing the future of our Market Towns and building social capital. Examples of such activity include the Thetford Stage and Screen Festival (a successful four-day event that showcases the cultural life of the town) and Discover Downham's Create and Thrive project (which hosts a variety of creative workshops in Downham Market).

Actions:

SUPPORTING ATTRACTIVE AND RESILIENT MARKET TOWNS AND HIGH STREETS, CREATING MORE CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

- Collaboration to support the delivery of structural funding programmes such as the Towns Funds in King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth and Thetford.
- Delivering improvements in local transport and active travel, increasing opportunities for walking and cycling and access to local services and jobs,
- Deliver cultural and heritage 'jewels-in-the-crown' such as St George's Guildhall in King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth Winter Gardens.
- Deliver innovative solutions to improve access to services in market towns, such as MIND Hub Dereham, a new multi-partner facility for the community.
- Support innovative approaches to creative and cultural programming that improves access and quality, such as a rotating county-wide cultural programme across urban and market town venues
- Support key assets for communities, such as expansion to the provision of sports and wellbeing facilities at the NEST.
- Re-purposing town-centre assets as co-working and community centres, such as Attleborough Railway Innovation Hub.
- Earn Local campaign to encourage remote workers based in Norfolk to join the local economy, either as entrepreneurs or to increase employee pool of skills and talent.
- Developing a best practice approach to strategic place making and public realm investment, such as Future Breckland
- Encourage innovation and entrepreneurialism on the high street through a meanwhile uses programme, such as The Meanwhile Project in Breckland.
- Investing in key economic infrastructure for urban areas such as The Livestock Market or the market in Norwich.
- 'Banking hubs', such as Holt Banking hub, that provide access to banking in place of the closure of traditional high street banks.
- Encourage market towns to build on the example of Diss, who have developed their cultural and heritage offer through the heritage triangle and the Corn Hall project, serving both the local community and attracting visitors to Norfolk.

Priority 2: Strengthen communities, support resident wellbeing and increase pride of place

Reducing inequalities

Our communities and businesses have a profound sense of pride in the county.

As we set out in the chapters above, we also have communities facing long term deprivation and barriers to wellbeing and economic opportunity, particularly in Great Yarmouth, Thetford, King's Lynn and Norwich.

Actions:

REDUCING INEQUALITIES AND ADDRESSING CONCENTRATED POCKETS OF DEPRIVATION.

- Investing in place-based programmes that target deprivation and enhance the look and feel of local neighbourhoods like the housing refurbishment programme in Great Yarmouth.
- To reduce health inequalities, it is essential to increase the prevalence of healthy ageing. We will work with partners to raise awareness of what it means to age healthily (including the importance of maintaining and enhancing wellbeing and a good diet) and encourage interventions to make this a reality – particularly in areas where health inequalities are acute.
- Programmes and projects that raise ambition in deprived communities and promote economic inclusion, such as Boost in King's Lynn and Breckland and the Swan Youth Project in Downham Market.
- Encourage inclusive community engagement through models such as the Creative Assembly at Norwich Theatre which enables community interaction with the creative sector.
- Supporting the VCSE community to deliver targeted, high impact interventions, such as The Common Lot CiC (Community Interest Company) Skills Hub in Mile Cross.
- Improve access to youth facilities and services that support and enhance the wellbeing, learning opportunities, aspirations and life chances of young people, recognising the historic deficit of investment. We will work in partnership with organisations to deliver interventions from within the community, or through bespoke facilities.
- Community Resilience Grant Programme that encourages bottom-up solutions to community challenges and opportunities.
- Support and promote the Care Farm model, such as Clinks Care Farm, where vulnerable adults and young people are given access to high-impact alternatives to traditional support and therapies. The model also supports diversification in agriculture.
- Investing in Norfolk's places in a way that promotes health and wellbeing, such as adopting a Marmot Places approach in King's Lynn in partnership with the Institute of Health Equity
- Developing health and wellbeing partnerships between key stakeholders in Norfolk's places, through interventions which aim to increase levels of physical activity across the county.

Supporting VCSE organisations

Norfolk's strong Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises are interwoven into Norfolk's places and communities and are central in delivering Norfolk's future.

Norwich Theatre, Theatre Royal



Actions:

SUPPORTING VCSE ORGANISATIONS TO HAVE GREATER IMPACT

- Business support programmes for VCSE SME's, such as Go Digital, and specific business support packages targeted at VCSE.
- Mapping exercise of where VCSE organisations are already delivering areas of the economic strategy, and strategic investment where projects, programmes and organisations delivering strong outcomes can be supported.
- Providing long-term funding streams for VCSE groups and organisations that enable them to have the greatest impact. We will encourage groups, like FUSE Norwich, that enable VCSE's to connect with businesses, charities, local authorities and other institutions. Connections like this enable VCSE's to develop and expand which can lead to them having a great societal impact.
- Building capacity in VCSE groups and organisations through partnership programmes such as Tech Skills for Life.
- Supporting VCSE organisations with procurement for Norfolk County Council tenders.
- Branding and articulating the VCSE quarter on Prince of Wales Road in Norwich.
- Build in social value metrics to NCC assessment of outcomes for projects and programmes.

Priority 3: Promote Norfolk as a place to live, work, visit and invest

Enhancing & promoting Norfolk's reputation

All our goals and actions need to be supported by further work to consolidate and promote local and national views of Norfolk and what it offers. We need to work hard to show our strengths and demonstrate why choosing to invest, visit (even for a short time), live, work or start a business here is worth it.

Actions:

- Support the Norfolk Local Visitor Economy Partnership to provide strong local leadership and governance as a tourism destination.
- Work with the Business Improvement District to distinguish Norwich's brand identity, and run a communications campaign to attract workers to the city.
- Support innovative partnership working that encourages investment, such as GENERATE and East Wind, regional collaboration to encourage investment and ensure that local people benefit from growth
- Promote festivals and events such as Out There Arts in Great Yarmouth, Thetford Festival and the Lord Mayor's Procession in Norwich.
- 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 or Agri-Food.
- 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.
- Skills and training centres that connect to local sectoral opportunities and raise aspiration, such as ACE Centre or Digi-Tech Factory in Norwich
- Deliver the right housing mix across all tenures, through local plans.

Case Studies

St George's Guildhall and Creative Hub

- **BCKLWN, Norfolk Museums Service, National Trust**
- **£8.1M Town deal fund, supported by UKSPF funding**
- **Project in development**

The venue will be redeveloped to offer daytime educational programmes, evening performances and creative spaces for organisations and individuals. It aims to transform an under-utilised Norfolk heritage site into a vibrant cultural centre, engaging local youth and fostering community involvement. Filling the existing funding gap for the redevelopment will help to foster the economic opportunities offered by the site and invigorate economic activity in the district's culture, heritage and visitor economy sector.



Future Breckland Programme

- **Breckland District Council, Residents, Town & Parish Councils, Norfolk County Council, Private Sector**
- **Projects ongoing**

Through extensive collaboration, six key objectives were established for each market town: regeneration, heritage and culture, business growth, housing and infrastructure investment, sustainability and wellbeing, and educational attainment. Input from more than 22,000 stakeholders over eighteen months shaped the development of the programme, resulting in Town Delivery Plans for each market town.



Common Lot CIC

- **Norwich City Council, local residents, the Mile Cross Events & Projects Group, Norwich City Council, Norwich Freeman's Charity, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Places for People & The Norfolk Community Foundation.**
- **Investment from UKSPF: £90,000 over 2 years. Projects ongoing.**

The Common Lot CIC (Community Interest Company) are delivering a creative Skills Sharing Hub in Mile Cross. Using a retail property, converted into a community facility, they deliver significant social value through facilitating peer-to-peer skills share activities. The Hub builds soft skills, confidence and wellbeing whilst breaking down isolation in Norwich's most deprived community.



Norwich

Our Commitment



Summary

This strategy has been framed around four key pillars of the economy – Local Business, People and Skills, Infrastructure and Placemaking and Communities. The table summarises what has been explored in depth in the strategy: the major opportunities and barriers that exist in Norfolk and the priorities for action that these give rise to.

The preceding pages outline in detail the activities that will enable us to deliver against these priorities, that are either in train by ourselves and our partners or that we will look to support in the future.

Opportunities and barriers have been identified through extensive engagement and detailed qualitative analysis.

The actions outlined within the Local Growth Plan are a result of the engagement undertaken to date. These will be reviewed and updated to reflect new government policy and emerging opportunities that Norfolk is well positioned to capitalise on.

MAJOR OPPORTUNITIES	LONG STANDING BARRIERS	CROSS CUTTING THEME	PRIORITIES FOR ACTION
<p>DECARBONISATION AND SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>SUPPORTING RURAL AND COASTAL ECONOMIES</p> <p>REDUCING INEQUALITIES</p>			
<p>Successful clusters of future-focused sectors - clean energy, financial services and future food and agriculture, with strong research assets</p>	<p>Obstacles to growth for many businesses: commercial space, recruitment, innovation skills</p>	<p>LOCAL BUSINESS</p>	<p>Key sectors</p> <p>Priority 1: Support businesses in high-value clusters to grow, innovate and generate more local value</p> <p>Priority 2: Ensure businesses in all places across Norfolk can succeed, prioritising growth in strategic sites and areas</p> <p>Supporting Norfolk's Businesses</p> <p>Priority 1: Grow, strengthen and future proof our business base, targeting needs of SMEs</p> <p>Priority 2: Support businesses to provide quality jobs, wages and conditions</p>
<p>Well anchored firms, with high employment, resilient business base and a high quality of life</p>	<p>Significant skills barriers, with lower qualification levels and issues accessing new skills opportunities</p>	<p>PEOPLE AND SKILLS</p>	<p>Priority 1: Build the workforce and talent of the future – both people entering work for the first time, or coming back to work</p> <p>Priority 2: Inspire and enable lifelong learning and workforce development</p> <p>Priority 3: Equip and future proof our workforce to be able to take advantage of green and digital skills and opportunities</p> <p>Priority 4: Supporting collaboration, leadership and efficient and accessible delivery in the skills system</p>
<p>Growth corridors, major sites for employment space and housing investment</p>	<p>Effects of long term under-investment in infrastructure</p>	<p>INFRA-STRUCTURE</p>	<p>Priority 1: Ensuring the enabling infrastructure is in place to support growth across Norfolk</p> <p>Priority 2: Improving transport connectivity</p> <p>Priority 3: Sustainable development, decarbonisation and climate change adaptation</p>
<p>Vibrant communities, with a strong culture, heritage and visitor economy offer and high quality of life.</p>	<p>Health and wealth inequalities, with isolation compounding challenges for rural and coastal communities</p>	<p>PLACE MAKING AND COMMUNITIES</p>	<p>Priority 1: To support all places across Norfolk to provide a high quality of life</p> <p>Priority 2: Strengthen communities, support resident wellbeing and increase pride of place</p> <p>Priority 3: Promote Norfolk as a place to live, work, visit and invest</p>

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.

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. 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.

