

REPORT TO CABINET

Open/Exempt		Would any decisions proposed :			
Any especially affected Wards	Mandatory/	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide		YES/NO	
	Discretionary /	Need to be recommendations to Council		YES/NO	
	Operational	Is it a Key Decision		YES/NO	
Lead Member: Cllr Simon Ring E-mail: cllr.simon.ring@west-norfolk.gov.uk			Other Cabinet Members consulted: Cllr Beales		
			Other Members consulted:		
Lead Officer: Jemma Curtis E-mail: jemma.curtis@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial:			Other Officers consulted: Chief Executive, Assistant Director for Housing, Regeneration & Place.		
Financial Implications NO	Policy/ Personnel Implications YES/NO	Statutory Implications YES/NO	Equal Impact Assessment YES/NO If YES: Pre-screening/ Full Assessment	Risk Management Implications YES/NO	Environmental Considerations YES/NO
If not for publication, the paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act considered to justify that is (are) paragraph(s)					

Date of meeting: 17th October 2024

NORFOLK ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Summary

This report outlines the process undertaken by Norfolk County Council to develop a new economic strategy for Norfolk, the key priorities highlighted within the draft strategy and a recommendation for the Borough Council to endorse.

The purpose of the strategy is to provide an up-to-date economic growth strategy for Norfolk, for the next 5 years, building on the Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy produced by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP); functions of which have transferred to Norfolk County Council. The strategy will be an overarching document for Norfolk, to encompass thematic, place based and sector strategies to help grow our local economy and support the people who live and work here. The draft Norfolk Economic Strategy was co-developed alongside the West Norfolk Economic Strategy, including evidence base and stakeholder consultation within West Norfolk. The draft West Norfolk Economic Strategy (currently out to public consultation) is aligned in identification of key sectors, priorities and actions to support inclusive economic growth.

Recommendation

1. BCKLWN to endorse the draft Norfolk Economic Strategy, which will also be known as the 'Local Growth Plan' for Norfolk, subject to any amendments suggested by Cabinet.

Reason for Decision:

The draft Norfolk Economic Strategy will act as a policy for the Norfolk County Council, but also serve as a framework for a wide range of partners including districts, education institutes and the private sector. The strategy will act as a **Local Growth Plan** for the new Labour Government, who will expect bids for funding to reference the strategy. It is therefore an important policy document which will open up opportunities for West Norfolk in line with the corporate priority to support growth and prosperity and the priorities emerging from the West Norfolk Economic Strategy.

1 Background

- 1.1 Government requires Norfolk to have an economic strategy as part of the LEP Integration, and there are opportunities associated with the future potential for devolution and long-term funding. The new strategy is committed to recognising place-based needs and the interconnection between places.
 - 1.2 The Economic Strategy will act as the lead document for a number of related documents such as the Strategic Skills Plan, which is a requirement from DfE for the devolution of the Adult Education Budget, the Norfolk Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and other strategies covering growth at a county and district level.
 - 1.3 The Norfolk Economic Strategy development was supported by the Norfolk Office for Data Analytics (NODA) and independent experts MetroDynamics. The strategy builds on four main pillars:
 - People
 - Business
 - Infrastructure
 - Placemaking and Community
- Cross cutting themes for the strategy include:
- Decarbonisation and sustainability
 - Supporting Rural and Coastal communities and recognising different parts of Norfolk will have different challenges, and therefore different needs and solutions.
 - Reducing Inequality and ensuring we work towards inclusive growth.
- 1.4 The draft Norfolk Economic Strategy provides an overview of Norfolk's economy and key priority areas of focus to address economic growth, which is also inclusive and sustainable growth, aligned to the different needs of urban, rural and coastal areas of Norfolk. Strengths, opportunities and challenges for growth are listed against the main

pillars of the strategy; key priorities are then highlighted- with actions listed under each priority and measures of impact.

- 1.5 The strategy sets a framework for priority interventions – and this is demonstrated through a twin track approach, firstly capitalising on high growth assets in our key sectors, such as clean energy, agri-food/ agri-tech, advanced manufacturing and engineering, digital/ ICT and also our strong financial services sector - in order to grow the economy, improve levels of productivity and support creation of higher wage jobs. But as well as high growth and emerging sectors, the strategy highlights it is equally important that we also support the foundational economy in Norfolk, for example agriculture, health and social care, the visitor economy. All of which are particularly important to West Norfolk, not just Norfolk as a whole.
- 1.6 If we don't protect and sustain our foundational economy, improve the quality of these jobs, then it becomes much harder to connect residents to opportunities and grow our economy.

2. Development of the Strategy

- 2.1 There were four phases to developing the strategy: building the evidence base and developing the logic model, extensive stakeholder engagement, including a series of workshops with over 500 organisations and individuals, developing the narrative and drafting the strategy. The draft strategy has been endorsed by the Public Sector Leaders' Board and will now be reviewed by all district councils and the new Norfolk Business Board over the Autumn, ahead of Norfolk County Council's Cabinet meeting in November 2024.
- 2.2 During January – April 2024, Norfolk County Council worked with MetroDynamics to develop the Strategy; and also, the Norfolk Office of Data Analytics to update the evidence base and undertake analysis of that the evidence, what it tells us about Norfolk's strengths, opportunities and challenges.
- 2.3 A series of workshops of 17 workshops were delivered across the county, to meet with stakeholders and seek their views on what they would like to see in the Norfolk Economic Strategy. Workshops were co-designed, with support from district council officers and VCSE representatives. Stakeholders included businesses (large and SME), skills providers, VCSE and local government.
- 2.4 The draft Norfolk Economic Strategy was co-developed alongside the West Norfolk Economic Strategy, including evidence base and stakeholder consultation within West Norfolk. The draft West Norfolk Economic Strategy is aligned in identification of key sectors, priorities and actions to support inclusive economic growth.
- 2.5 The workshops were well attended, with over 500 organisations and individuals engaged. The Workshops aimed to raise awareness of the emerging Norfolk Economic Strategy. Workshops included a review of

data/ evidence at a county & district level, SWOT analysis - key areas to focus the strategy, against each of the four pillars, a review investment needs – including a deeper economic understanding of urban, rural and coastal areas; and breakout groups to capture discussions & recurring themes. The second round of workshops aimed to revisit stakeholders from first round and to also reach new stakeholders; report findings from round 1 workshops, to test the emerging priorities from the analysis with groups and gain consensus on priority areas for intervention and investment. Also to capture suggested activities for intervention.

- 2.6 During May-June 2024, Norfolk County Council (NCC) worked with MetroDynamics to finalise the evidence base and draft the strategy, with subject leads. The draft Norfolk Economic Strategy is now being circulated for review and input, ahead of Cabinet review by Norfolk's district councils, the Norfolk Business Board and Norfolk County Council Cabinet sign off thereafter.

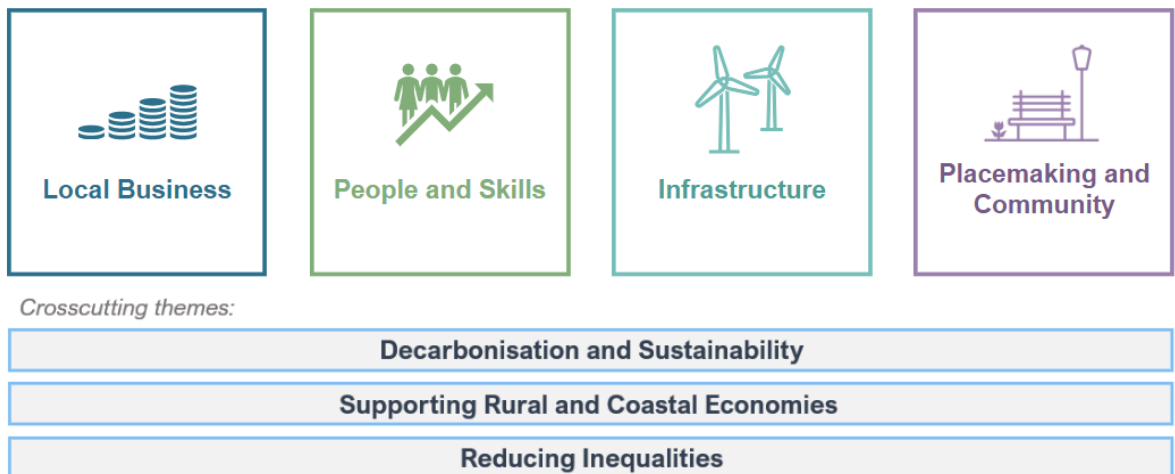
3. Proposal for a Norfolk Economic Strategy

- 3.1 Norfolk is a £20bn economy and home to 916,100 people. An historic county that plays a vital role in the UK's future and 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. With the Broads National Park, Norfolk Coast National Landscape and miles of coastline and countryside we have an enviable natural environment.
- 3.2 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. Norfolk's smaller market towns and villages help give the county its distinct character and, on the coast. But earnings and skills levels in Norfolk are lower than the country as a whole and we have communities both rural and urban facing real challenges of access to employment and healthy outcomes.
- 3.3 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 business' 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.

- 3.4 Now is the right time for a county wide review of our priorities and make sure that we are taking the right actions locally across public and private sectors partners and seeking the investment we need from Government. This strategy will underpin how Norfolk will target local needs and priorities, planning for the long term. It provides a strong platform for future Government funding, with the new Government clear that it is committed to a devolved approach to investing in places and growth.
- 3.5 The ambition set out in the strategy is for Norfolk to become a national example of how to develop a new model for economic governance, that secures for the future, building on the critical 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.

4. Approach

Themes of the Economic Strategy



- 4.1 The strategy sets out how Norfolk 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.

- 4.2 Based on the evidence and wide engagement with partners a set of agreed actions against each of four major drivers of the Norfolk economy – local businesses, people and skills, places and communities and infrastructure. The strategy includes a set of 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. It was 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.
- 4.3 The draft Norfolk Economic Strategy provides an overview of Norfolk’s economy and key priority areas of focus to address economic growth, which is also inclusive and sustainable growth, aligned to the needs of urban, rural and coastal areas of Norfolk. Strengths, opportunities and challenges for growth are listed against the main pillars of the strategy; key priorities are highlighted with actions listed under each priority and measures of impact.

5 Vision

- 5.1 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.
- Centre of excellence for research and innovation.
 - A European leader in Financial Services, with a specialism in insurance and Insurtech.
 - A major growth location as part of the Cambridge to Norwich growth corridor, with large scale sites, growing clusters in advanced Manufacturing and engineering, digital tech, driven by strong research and innovation links across the corridor as a whole.
 - An international and domestic tourism destination for the UK with growing value and expanding offer.
 - An economy that prioritises growth alongside Health and Wellbeing.
- 5.2 The draft Norfolk Economic Strategy provides an overview of Norfolk’s economy and key priority areas of focus to address economic growth, which is also inclusive and sustainable growth, aligned to the needs of urban, rural and coastal areas of Norfolk. Strengths, opportunities and challenges for growth are listed against the main pillars of the strategy; key priorities are highlighted with actions listed under each priority and measures of impact.

6. Policy Implications

- 6.1 Throughout the development of the Norfolk Economic Strategy, NCC have tried to ensure strategic alignment with existing and emerging district economic plans, sector strategies and also Norfolk strategies - such as the Norfolk Climate Strategy, Norfolk Apprenticeship Strategy and Flourish.
- 6.2 With the West Norfolk Economic Vision and Strategy 2045 being developed alongside the Norfolk Economic Strategy, with shared evidence base and stakeholder engagement, there is clear alignment shown within West Norfolk's five strategic pillars, including Thriving Towns, Access to Education and Good Work, Focus on Specialised Sectors Agri-food, Engineering, Waste & Water and Visitor Economy; Management of Natural Resources, and Happy, Healthy People living in Inclusive Communities. These will guide collective efforts to ensure West Norfolk's economy achieves inclusive, sustainable, and prosperous economic growth for residents and businesses, while ensuring that West Norfolk's beautiful heritage, landscape and natural resources can continue to be responsibly used by its community and tourists.
- 6.3 The Norfolk Economic Strategy will act as the lead document for a number of related documents such as the Strategic Skills Plan, which is a requirement from DfE for the devolution of the Adult Education Budget, the Norfolk Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and other strategies covering growth at a county and district level.
- 6.4 During the development of the Norfolk Economic Strategy, officers also worked closely with EELGA and MetroDynamics as part of the steering group for the 'Opportunity East' report – an economic and infrastructure analysis for the East of England, to ensure strategic and regional alignment to Norfolk's priorities. In addition to working with a wide range of stakeholders, over 500 organisations, Norfolk has also been working closely with Suffolk County Council on the development of their economic strategy – to ensure the same data methodologies are applied and key sector opportunities that expand beyond county boundaries, such as Clean Energy and Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, with regional significance and where a joint partnership approach to growth is required.

7. Timeline

- 7.1 Consultation on the Draft Strategy has been through Norfolk Chief Executives Group, Public Sector Leaders Board, Norfolk County Council's Infrastructure & Development Committee, Norfolk Business Board during June – August 2024. All District Councils in Norfolk are being asked if they wish to endorse the strategy at a local level ahead of the Norfolk County Council's Cabinet & Full Council endorsement scheduled to take place in November & December 2024.

8 Financial Implications

8.1 Funding for the actions in this strategy will come from a range of sources, including private sector investors, businesses and central Government. 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.

11. Personnel Implications

11.1 The strategy been developed by staff from Norfolk County Council's Economic Development Team, in collaboration with Norfolk's district councils and supported by input from the Norfolk Office of Data Analytics, together with expert input from Metrodynamics.

12. Environmental Considerations

12.1 A key theme of the strategy is sustainability, with a focus on helping the county achieve its Net Zero goals.

13. Statutory Considerations

13.1 The draft Norfolk Economic Strategy will act as a policy for the Norfolk County Council, but also serve as a framework for a wide range of partners including districts, education institutes and the private sector. The strategy will act as a **Local Growth Plan** for the new Labour Government, who will expect bids for funding to reference the strategy. Norfolk County Council is working closely with MHCLG to ensure this alignment.

14. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(Pre screening report template attached)

15. Risk Management Implications

15.1 Government require Norfolk to have an Economic Strategy as part of the conditions for the Local Enterprise Partnership Integration, into Norfolk County Council in the financial year of 2024/25. The Norfolk Economic Strategy will be known as Norfolk's Local Growth Plan, a requirement of the new Government. Norfolk County Council is working closely with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to align to emerging guidance for the Local Growth Plans. MHCLG have confirmed they are supportive of the draft Norfolk Economic Strategy (Norfolk's Local Growth Plan).

15.2 The Norfolk Economic Strategy has been developed over a period of 10 months, working closely in consultation with local stakeholders, business, skills providers and district councils. If the strategy delayed, there is a risk that it will not be in place as part of the Government requirement for LEP Integration and partners are not able to move forward to deliver against key priorities and actions.

16. Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

None.

17. Background Papers

Appendix A: Draft Norfolk Economic strategy: Local Growth Plan

Appendix B – Evidence Base

Appendix C: Draft West Norfolk Economic Strategy [West Norfolk economic strategy | West Norfolk economic strategy | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)



Stage 1 - Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy/service/function	Draft Norfolk Economic Strategy				
Is this a new or existing policy/service/function? <i>(tick as appropriate)</i>	New	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Existing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service is rigidly constrained by statutory obligations, and identify relevant legislation.	The purpose is to provide an up-to-date economic growth strategy for Norfolk, for the next 5 years, building on the Norfolk & Suffolk Economic Strategy. The strategy will be an overarching document for Norfolk, to encompass thematic, place based and sector strategies to help grow our local economy and support the people who live and work here.				
Who has been consulted as part of the development of the policy/service/function? – new only <i>(identify stakeholders consulted with)</i>	Over 500 organisations and individuals were engaged in the development of the draft Norfolk Economic Strategy, including two dedicated workshops in West Norfolk with a cross section of stakeholders from SMEs, large companies, VCSE organisations, local government, skills providers and local colleges.				
Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group.</p> <p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p> <p><i>If potential adverse impacts are identified, then a full Equality Impact Assessment (Stage 2) will be required.</i></p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age	X			
	Disability	X			
	Sex			X	
	Gender Re-assignment			X	
	Marriage/civil partnership			X	
	Pregnancy & maternity			X	
	Race			X	
	Religion or belief			X	
	Sexual orientation			X	
	Other (eg low income, caring responsibilities)	X			

Question	Answer	Comments
<p>2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?</p>	No	
<p>3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?</p>	No	
<p>4. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?</p>	No	
<p>5. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions?</p> <p>If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	No	<p>Actions:</p> <hr/> <p>Actions agreed by EWG member:</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>If 'yes' to questions 2 - 4 a full impact assessment will be required unless comments are provided to explain why this is not felt necessary:</p> <p>Decision agreed by EWG member:</p>		
<p>Assessment completed by:</p> <p>Name</p>	<p>Jemma Curtis</p>	
<p>Job title</p>	<p>Regeneration Programmes Manager</p>	
<p>Date completed</p>	<p>18/09/24</p>	

Complete EIA Pre-screening Form to be shared with Corporate Policy (corporate.policy@west-norfolk.gov.uk)