

Greater Norwich Economic Strategy 2009 - 2014

Delivering our 10 key actions

In April 2009, the Greater Norwich Development Partnership published the Greater Norwich Economic Strategy which identified the 10 key priorities for delivery by 2014. A majority of the original 10 key actions have been achieved; this is against a landscape of much reduced and changed funding streams than when the strategy was published.

Despite the economic downturn, the Greater Norwich area has delivered beyond the aspirations identified in the 10 Key Actions and these are detailed below, including sign-posting to where you can find more information.

The economic landscape has changed greatly since the publication of the Greater Norwich Economic Strategy, most significantly with the establishment of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Strategic Economic Partnership (New Anglia LEP). New Anglia LEP submitted its [Strategic Economic Plan](#) for Norfolk and Suffolk (2015 – 2026) to Government earlier this year. This builds on existing strategies including '[Delivering Economic Growth in Norfolk](#)' (2012 – 2017) that will be refreshed every five years. District economic strategies for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk will continue to be important drivers of economic growth, addressing local need.

A [Greater Norwich City Deal](#) was signed with Government in December 2013. City Deal Partners' ambition for the Greater Norwich City Deal is to enable knowledge based industries to develop and grow. The deal focuses on turning world class knowledge and ideas into world class jobs.

The City Deal has three strands:

- Targeted enterprise and innovation initiatives to help existing business to expand and enable new small and medium sized enterprises to capture and commercialise research and academic excellence in life sciences and biotechnology at the Norwich Research Park, the digital creative cluster in the city centre and the aviation cluster based around Norwich International Airport.
- Providing essential housing, transportation and utility services necessary to meet the infrastructure needs of a growing and expanding local economy
- A LEP wide skills programme that will provide a locally responsive skills system to maximise employer involvement and investment and increase apprenticeships and graduate internships.

Jobs, homes, prosperity for local people

■ Developing Norwich Research Park

We said we would develop [Norwich Research Park](#) as a dynamic driver of economic growth, creating at least 1,300 new jobs by 2014. We said it would become an innovation powerhouse and a thriving research community, working closely with businesses to provide ground breaking solutions to the global challenges of food security, low carbon innovation, (bio)energy, healthy ageing and living with environmental change.

In March 2010 Norwich Research Park received notification of a £26M grant from the Department of Business Innovation and Skills for investment in its infrastructure. This major investment, administered by the BBSRC on behalf of the Government is underpinned by the Norwich Research Park vision for science and enterprise. '[Project 26](#)' will help Norwich Research Park create 5000 new jobs over the next 10 years and will make the Park more attractive to prospective investors and partners, as well as attracting a world-class workforce. It will deliver

- A new Centrum Building and commercial space providing prestige laboratory space and accommodation in the heart of the park. It will have a Customisable Category 2 laboratory space, high quality office space, meeting and board rooms, seminar and exhibition space as well as an onsite restaurant and café. (completion May 2014)
- New Enterprise Centre (Exemplary Low Carbon Building - completion late 2014)
- Enhancements to the Innovation Centre and low cost commercial space (completed March 2012)
- Improvements to IT infrastructure
- Improvements to on-site infrastructure including car parks, footpaths, lighting, roads
- Improvements to the public highways around the Park

We said we would help the new [Genome Analysis Centre \(TGAC\)](#) become a world-class centre for research. We said we would exploit opportunities for collaborative working to commercialise knowledge, and support the expansion of the successful Bio incubator project to provide additional premises for new businesses.

TGAC is now one of the largest computing hardware facilities dedicated to life science research in Europe, its research aligning with those of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council through the application of genomic technologies. TGAC now also provides high quality laboratory and office accommodation for start-up and smaller companies. It has a fully fitted Category 2 laboratory space, office suites and shared equipment laboratory.

Going forward TGAC will build excellence in genomics and computational bioscience to develop the Norwich Research Park as a world-leading centre in bioinformatics and applied biotechnology.

The improvements to infrastructure and buildings will underpin future jobs growth planned at the Norwich Research Park; an additional 7,000 jobs are expected in the sector in the years up to 2031.

■ Supporting Enterprise Hubs

We said we would expand [Hethel Engineering Centre](#) to increase its capacity to create and accommodate more new businesses as part of a programme of actions to support innovation and expand engineering and technology companies. We also said there would be a particular focus on low carbon vehicle technology.

The Advanced Manufacturing Centre is a 4000m² extension to Hethel Engineering Centre that opened in April 2014. It has more than doubled the size of the facility and demonstrates that the centre has been very successful. Since it opened it has incubated 83 businesses of which 95% are still in business. A total of 350 jobs have been created at Hethel, and those businesses which have moved on have employed 150 more people between them. Work to establish a technology park on the site is continuing, and remains a key ambition for the Partnership

We said the **East of England Production centre, EPIC**, would play a key role in supporting the creative industries, particularly through the provision of excellent High Definition facilities as well as through the provision of information to help businesses understand the constantly changing ICT and digital media landscape. This was achieved with the project being so successful that it was transferred to the private sector to give it continued investment and ensure its commercial viability. The main features of the original project have been retained and a new partnership with Community Music East has been established.

■ Transport improvements

We said we would ensure the transport system in greater Norwich facilitates and meets the needs of economic growth by implementing the [Norwich Area Transportation Strategy \(NATS\)](#), including the [Northern Distributor Road](#) (NDR). NATS includes significant enhancement of the public transport system and the NDR is essential to provide the capacity for this.

The NDR is also critical for providing access to strategic employment sites at Broadland Business Park and Norwich International Airport, and for improving access to the strategic road network for large areas of north and north east Norfolk.

The NDR has secured £89.5m of central Government funding and the planning application was submitted in January 2014 and is being considered through the Nationally Strategic Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) planning process. A decision for go-ahead on all aspects of the scheme is expected by spring 2015. Across Norwich we have secured significant investment in Public Transport through the Better Bus Area Fund. In addition, Norwich's City Deals status has enabled improvements to cycling through the City Cycle Ambition Grant.

In rural areas we said we would improve accessibility to key services and employment opportunities. Monitoring of our Local Transport Plan accessibility indicator, which measures people's ability to access towns with a range of services including employment opportunities by public transport, shows that this is continuing to improve.

A **fast and reliable rail service** is critically important to improving the competitive position of the Greater Norwich economy and we said we would develop a campaign to lobby for improvements to rail services from Norwich.

We said we would work with rail operators in the short-term to improve service and rail infrastructure and we are continuing to work on securing rail improvements. Committed enhancements recently announced include improvements to the intercity carriages on the Norwich

to London line (including refreshed carriages with at-seat power sockets), and infrastructure upgrades on the Norwich to London line to allow additional train services in to London Liverpool Street and at Ely to enable improved passenger services from Norwich in the future (to Cambridge and Peterborough).

A Norwich in 90 campaign was launched to lobby for a 90 minute journey between Norwich and the capital, with a more reliable service, new trains and carriages, with the new wifi internet service and more capacity to stop over-crowding a peak times. A [Taskforce](#) to deliver *Norwich in 90* was announced by the Chancellor in November 2013, made up of the Department for Transport, Network Rail and local MPs. The Taskforce will make recommendations to government for agreement in November, ahead of the start of negotiations for the new franchise period.

■ Improving Broadband Capacity

The provision of high-speed broadband is an increasingly important issue for businesses in Greater Norwich. We said we would develop a **broadband strategy for Norfolk**, with a particular focus on Greater Norwich, and that we would also develop a series of interventions to improve broadband provision and ensure the competitiveness of the Greater Norwich economy.

In December 2012 Norfolk County Council and BT signed a deal that meant more than 80% of Norfolk's homes and businesses could expect to be able to access superfast broadband (24 Megabits per second plus) by the end of 2015. Without this intervention, the planned commercial rollout would have only reached around 40% of Norfolk's population. In addition to this, the [Better Broadband for Norfolk](#) programme intends to make minimum broadband speeds of 2Mbps available to all Norfolk premises by the end of 2015. The county Council provided £15m, matched by a grant of £15.44 from Broadband Delivery UK and a further contribution from BT.

The first services became available in July 2013 and over the next two years, work to survey, upgrade and install broadband infrastructure will continue in 'phases'. We will seek further funding to try and extend the reach of superfast broadband into more of the county, including Greater Norwich

■ Tackling unemployment and raising skills

We said we would respond to the impact of the recession on local people by working to promote and deliver skills training, particularly supporting unemployed people and tackling worklessness.

We said we would use government funding to initiate new jobs. From 2009 Norfolk County Council was successful in securing £8.4m from DWP's Future Jobs Fund, creating more than 1300 across Norfolk for young people aged 18-24. The outcomes for this project, which was delivered by a consortium of over 40 organisations were very positive and resulted in the majority of these young people moving into employment or further education.

In addition to this, Norfolk County Council developed the [Norfolk Apprenticeships Initiative](#) which provided £3.5m to fund 400 apprenticeships in the private sector, £200,000 to fund 20 apprenticeships within the council and an investment of £891,000 for 81 apprenticeships was funded through the council-owned Norse group. We have also supported and promoted the [Norwich for Jobs](#) campaign.

We said we would set up a [Norfolk Employment and Skills Board](#), to ensure sufficient funding was directed to meet the needs of businesses and local people. The Norfolk Employment and Skills Board was established and operated for a number of years providing strategic governance from key parties including colleges, SFA, DWP and sector groups. This Board was disbanded in 2013 following the success of the City Deal bids which saw the creation of a LEP wide Skills Board which is now providing

this strategic governance. Norfolk stakeholders are represented on this board.

We said we would support the development of vocational skills centres in schools to provide training for all ages from 14 upwards in disciplines such as engineering, tourism and construction. There has been significant work to develop the vocational pathways for young people into our key sectors. One of the notable examples is the [Norwich UTC](#) (university technical college) which will open its doors to its first cohort in September 2014. This will provide educational pathways for students from the age of 14 who are specifically interested in a career in engineering.

■ Building a Low Carbon economy

- We said we would develop measures to help grow new businesses and support existing businesses in their efforts to become more sustainable.
- The Growing Green Homes project was funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and was delivered in partnership with Wherry Housing Association and ADAPT. The project provided opportunities for new and existing businesses to grow by understanding and working in the green retrofit market. Broadland District Council will continue to deliver this programme until March 2015 and use the learning from the project to support Broadland-based businesses.
- We said we would establish a Low Carbon Innovation Centre to develop new market opportunities and businesses in the low carbon economy and this has been set up at the University of East Anglia by the ADAPT team.
- We said we would develop a virtual one stop shop for environmental advice to help business profitability by reducing carbon emissions; The Energy Team at Broadland District Council have set up an Environmental Business Network and keep information flowing to members through social media platforms.
- We said we would set up a public and private sector procurement initiative to support and build on local purchasing programmes, minimising transport and recycling investment in the local economy; Broadland District and Norwich City Councils have developed Public and Private Sector Procurement Policies to work towards this aim.
- We said we would support the development of exemplar Eco-Communities, such as Rackheath, to champion modern and environmentally friendly construction, living and working. Broadland District Council has championed and supported the delivery of 26 new affordable homes in Rackheath that have been built to the highest eco standards currently available. Significant funding has also been secured to support retro-fit programmes and in the region of 150 properties have already benefitted from this scheme.

■ Creating jobs and training in construction

Greater Norwich is set to grow with over 36,000 new homes and 33,000 additional jobs by 2026. The Government requires that all new homes built from 2016 onwards must be zero carbon.

Norwich struck an innovative £7.5m deal with the Homes and Communities agency to build 1,300 new homes and invest in regeneration projects, creating new job and training opportunities.

We said we would develop and expand **training in sustainable building and green technology skills**, to ensure that local people can gain the skills to build a low carbon city.

Local unemployed people have been given new opportunities to work in the construction industry thanks to the [Building Futures in Norwich](#) scheme developed by city council's economic

development team working with training provider CTS Ltd and Norfolk Construction Forum.

'Building Futures in Norwich' ensures that contractually, construction firms working on particular housing developments must make sure 10 per cent of their workforces are sourced through Building Futures in Norwich and that these people are unemployed or new entrants to the labour market. The contractual clause has already been applied to HCA and Norwich City Council Strategic Partnership contracts for building 100 sustainable homes on small sites around the city which provided jobs with training for 16 unemployed people. It is now being extended to cover city council construction-related contracts and will also be included in planned house building projects in Bowthorpe for 1,300 houses.

■ Boosting retail and tourism

We said we would set up a **training programme for people who meet the public**, such as taxi drivers and shop assistants, so that they can act as well-informed ambassadors for Greater Norwich. We went one better than this and actually set up a City Hosts scheme.

Established in November 2012 the [Norwich Business Improvement District](#) (BID) is run for local businesses by local businesses. Norwich BID City Hosts are trained ambassadors and champions for the city centre BID area. City Hosts have a positive impact on people's experience of the city, helping people find interesting and different places to visit, and promoting the city as a friendly place to be. City Hosts are a helping hand, adding value to the city centre whilst showing people how friendly and vibrant the city is. Norwich City Hosts are out on the streets of Norwich every day of the week and speak to an average of 75 people per day. The BID's long term plan is to have a bank of more than 50 City Host volunteers who will be seen out and about in the city seven days a week, from 10am to 6pm.

We said we would establish a **Retail Academy** to train local people and support the development of the retail sector. A [RETAIL skills academy](#) was established in 2011 by City College Norwich. The academy is a member of the National Skills Academy for Retail. . The RETAIL skills academy is based among retailers in Chapelfield Shopping Centre in the city centre. It is the only such centre in the country to combine:

- A live trading environment - ego, a buy and sell fashion boutique, provides students with a live trading environment in which to learn, develop and showcase their retail skills;
- RETAIL advice centre, providing information and advice for individuals seeking to develop careers in retail, and for retailers wanting to enhance their businesses;
- RETAIL training suite, the brand new state of the art facility, with many unique features, offering award-winning training in all aspects of retail.

Training is available for every rung of the career ladder, from pre-employment knowledge to advanced business skills for retail owners, managers and leaders.

We said we would build on the strengths of Market Towns in Broadland and South Norfolk; recognising the critical role they play at the heart of sustainable communities in rural areas. In particular we will work to encourage new businesses back into high streets.

In Broadland we have been working with key stakeholders and have produced regeneration reports on our bigger market towns such as Aylsham, Reepham and Acle, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses before going on to help to set up working groups to carry projects forward.

Most of Broadland's towns now have organised events such as late night shopping and specialist

markets to increase footfall in the towns. Through new tourism based websites and increased use of social media our Broadland market towns also have a much better online presence too. Broadland's joined up approach with different stakeholders has allowed us to successfully seek new owners for vacant units and ultimately raise the profile of the towns.

With the promotion of not only the Greater Norwich part of Broadland but also the rural areas and market towns, with the emphasis on walking, cycling and local food, our businesses are supported with advice, training and grants throughout their development.

In South Norfolk we have been working together with the RETAIL Skills Academy to deliver a series of highly popular workshops for retailers in the Market Towns of Diss, Harleston, Loddon and Wymondham. Building on the success of these workshops we have arranged for the Retail Skills Academy to deliver a full programme of workshops covering a range of topics including Social Media – Marketing Made Simple, and Increasing Retail Sales through Effective Customer Care.

South Norfolk Council has embarked on a programme, known as the Market Towns Initiative, working with partners in the Market Towns of Diss, Harleston, Loddon and Wymondham to help increase footfall and economic growth.

Over the next 12-14 months we will be investing significantly in these four market towns so that their success and growth is replicated across the district. We are investing in a new branding and marketing regime and support partnership working with key groups (Town Teams) in each of the towns helping them identify the improvements and investments that their town needs.

Key elements of the Market Towns Initiative include working with them to establish and market their own distinct 'identity', improve street scene and particularly signage within the towns, an ongoing programme of events to keep a sense of vibrancy within the towns, new public toilets and installation of WiFi in their town centre. We are also working with Visit Norwich to boost tourism and so increase the share of the visitor economy in South Norfolk.

■ **Creating premises for new and expanding businesses**

We said we would develop measures to help grow new businesses and support existing businesses in their efforts to become more sustainable. Our original targets were affected by a number of major changes to policy and funding; consequently the public sector funding we had expected to secure for incubation business units was no longer available. However, a number of premises for new businesses have been developed by the private sector.

[Business Revolution's workhub](#) at the King Centre Norwich officially opened in 2011. The work hub recognises the change the mobile and digital revolution has made to both how and where business is undertaken. The workhub supports start-ups, mobile workers and businesses by providing the tools necessary to grow their business and help to provide the support larger organisations give to their employees. Business support based around digital technologies is provided at the workhub and financially supported by Norwich City and Norfolk County councils.

[Lenta Business Centre](#) - Norwich was developed in the heart of the city in The Royal, a prestigious building originally built as a hotel and now transformed into a business centre providing four floors of modern office suites. The business centre offers excellent serviced office space. It also provides virtual office space for businesses that are not yet ready to need physical premises.

The [Norwich Research Park Innovation Centre](#) reopened in August 2010; the building has been completely refurbished and rebuilt internally to create 30 ultra-modern, high quality offices and laboratory accommodation on three floors.

Phase 2 of the [Henderson Centre's](#) light industrial units was completed in 2009. A further seven workshops were developed and made available on easy in, easy out rental terms.

■ Raising Greater Norwich's business profile

Greater Norwich is a major regional economic centre. There is a strong need to **raise the profile of Greater Norwich as a business location**. We will work to create an exciting, new campaign, aimed primarily at the UK's business community that will raise awareness of Greater Norwich and Norfolk as a great place to do business.

- We had already developed the [World Class Norfolk](#) campaign, aimed primarily at the UK's business community that has raised the awareness of Greater Norwich and Norfolk as a great place to do business. It is still used as the main promotional device, with a maintained website and a property information portal. We also have a much stronger relationship with UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), since the abolition of the regional tier of Government, to raise the awareness of our key business assets. As far as Greater Norwich is concerned, we have focussed mainly on the financial and professional services sector, the health and life sciences sector, and the digital and creative media industries; ensuring that specialist sector focussed advisors as well as overseas posts are fully briefed on our offer. This has led to those sectors figuring prominently within UKTI's search facility; Norwich is one of highest ranking cities in terms of its financial services offer.