

Greater Norwich Growth Board

Green Infrastructure Strategy

A nature-based vision for supporting sustainable growth to 2038

Final V3 – April 2025



Foreword

In the heart of our evolving world, few initiatives hold as much promise for our future as those dedicated to protecting and enhancing our natural environment. The Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy embodies this promise, offering a visionary roadmap towards greener, healthier, and more resilient places.

This strategy is not merely a plan on paper; it is a testament to our collective commitment to nurturing the intricate web of green spaces, waterways, and wildlife habitats that define Greater Norwich. By investing in our natural capital, we are investing in the well-being of our communities, the richness of our biodiversity and the sustainability of our local economy.

As we navigate the challenges of urban growth and climate change, the importance of a robust and interconnected green and blue infrastructure cannot be overstated. It serves as the lifeline that supports not just the ecological health of our region, but also the physical and mental well-being of our residents.

From the air we breathe to the spaces we cherish for recreation and relaxation, green infrastructure is the foundation upon which a vibrant, inclusive, and prosperous future is built.

This strategy represents the culmination of extensive collaboration, innovative thinking and a deep-rooted passion for our environment. It is a call to action for every one of us - residents, businesses, and policymakers alike - to join forces and create a legacy that will be celebrated by generations to come.

Together, let us embrace this vision and work hand in hand to transform Greater Norwich into a beacon of sustainability and natural beauty. Our journey towards a greener future starts here and now, with the unwavering belief that we can, and will, make a difference.

Wendy Brooks
Head of Environment, Norfolk County Council

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¹ www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/44492/How-to-create-accessible-content

The Strategy was prepared on behalf of the Greater Norwich Growth Board by the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Delivery Group, supported by a consultant team led by CBA.

The Strategy is underpinned by a comprehensive suite of evidence studies and geospatial mapping data. This includes information about the existing Green Infrastructure in Greater Norwich, deficiencies in provision and opportunities for delivering new and enhanced Green Infrastructure.

The Strategy was funded by the Greater Norwich Growth Board. Images in the document are used with permission from Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council, Broadland District Council, Norfolk County Council and Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

This document should be read in conjunction with the supporting Strategic Delivery Plan and Story Map.

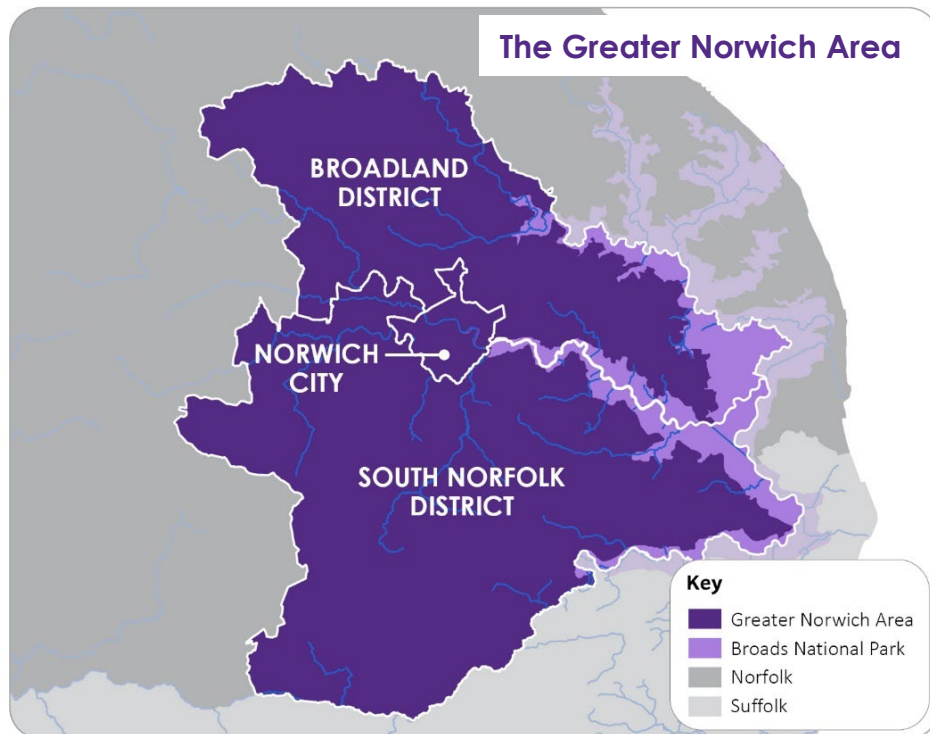
Accessibility Conformance Statement

This PDF document conforms with the Norfolk County Council guidelines for accessible online content¹. The source Word document was manually checked using the Microsoft Office Accessibility Tool.

1. Introduction

The Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) is a unique partnership bringing together the leaders of Norwich City Council (NCC), South Norfolk Council (SNC), Broadland District Council (BDC) and Norfolk County Council (NCoC).

Facilitated by an Infrastructure Investment Fund, the GNGB oversees delivery of infrastructure projects required to support the ambitious plans for sustainable growth to 2038 set out in the Greater Norwich Local Plan (adopted March 2024), including Green Infrastructure (GI).



We have developed a refreshed Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure strategy and evidence to support the Local Plan. It outlines our overarching vision and strategic approach to protecting, enhancing and expanding GI across Greater Norwich to 2038.

Since the original GI Strategy and Delivery Plan documents were published in 2007 and 2009 respectively, national policy and legislation has changed.

The new Strategy has an initial focus on GI delivery over the next five years. It identifies a range of strategic initiatives that support current national policy and align with local objectives, with a focus on nature recovery and enhancing access to nature.

The Strategy provides a flexible framework for guiding and prioritising the most suitable types, locations and scale of GI needed to support future growth, alongside health and wellbeing, biodiversity and climate resilience.

It has a key role to play in helping to secure funding by demonstrating the importance of GI, which can feed through to the GNGB's infrastructure planning requirements in support of the Greater Norwich Local Plan. The GI Strategy can also help inform future development plans and strategies.

The GI Strategy is for partners working across the environment sector and beyond in Greater Norwich – including planning, health, activity/sport, heritage, transport, water, farming, private and not-for-profit sectors.

We will work with stakeholders who share our vision – such as landowners, developers, businesses, charities, community groups and volunteers – to deliver GI projects that can help support sustainable growth.

The GI Strategy has been developed against the backdrop of the critical challenges for society of tackling climate change, restoring nature and improving health. Investment in GI can help address these challenges.

Climate and ecological challenges

Norfolk County Council is committed to tackling climate change as shown in its [Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan](#). Norwich City Council and Broadland District Council have formally declared climate and ecological emergencies in response to the urgent challenges they face.

The potential climate change impacts of warmer and wetter winters, hotter and drier summers and continued rises in sea levels present future challenges for both people and wildlife.

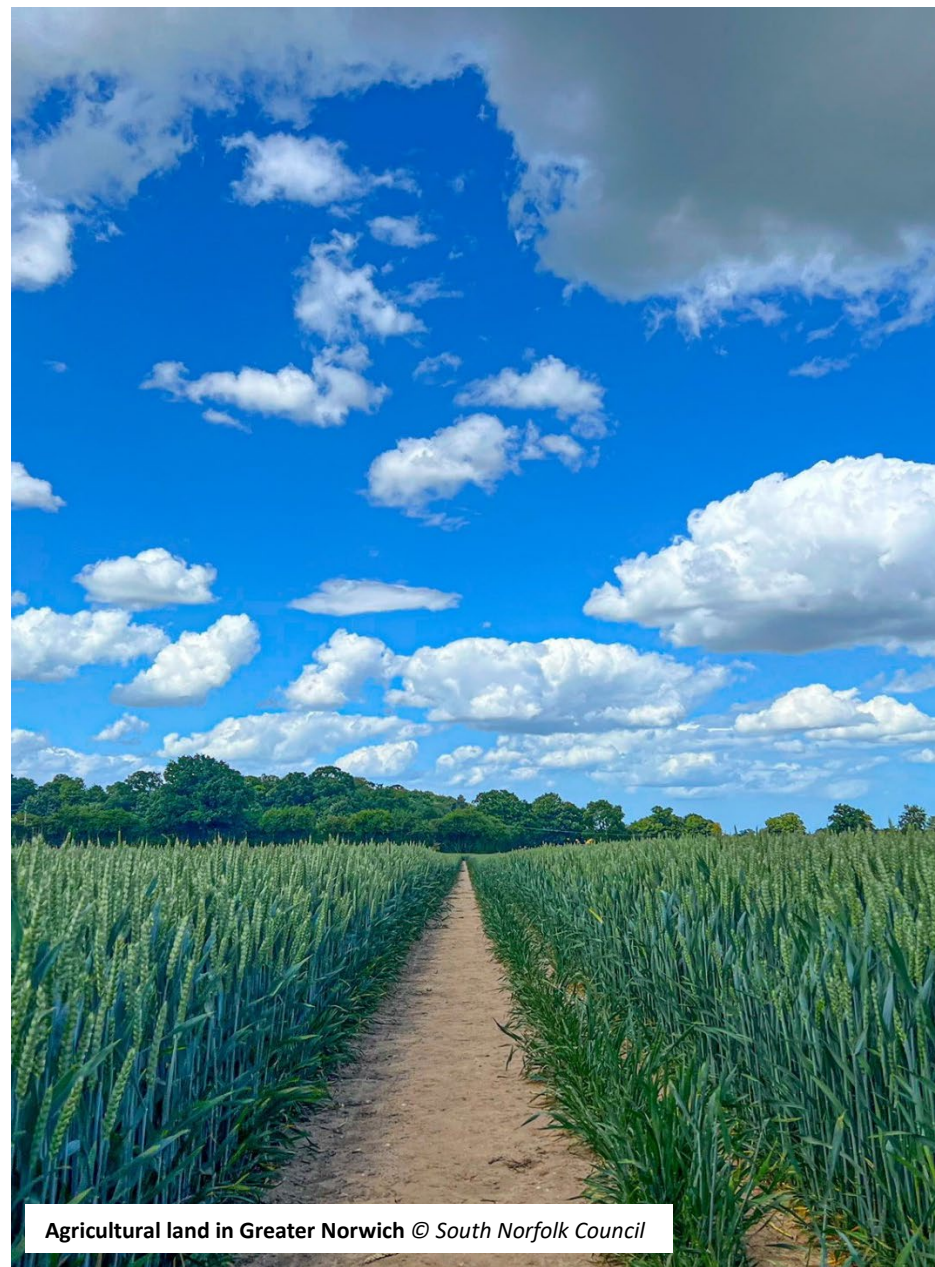
Key risks and opportunities for growth in Greater Norwich include increased flooding from extreme weather, urban heating, drought, soil erosion and changes to agriculture and habitat change. Agricultural and diffuse urban pollution on water quality is a particular issue for the area.

‘The twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change are interlinked. Reversing the destruction of nature is crucial to reducing emissions and reaching net zero as well as enabling us to live with the impacts of climate change’ – Natural England

Despite the challenges we face, there is significant scope to help the natural environment adapt to climate change, alongside opportunities for the provision of multi-functional GI for people and nature.

Evidence highlights how nature recovery, by creating bigger, better, more joined up networks of habitats and protected areas can increase the resilience of the natural environment’s ability to cope with climate change.

Working with nature or nature-based solutions helps us by mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, delivering wider benefits.



Agricultural land in Greater Norwich © South Norfolk Council

Tackling health inequalities

Many of our residents are also facing long-term health conditions, social isolation and economic hardship. These issues have often been heightened following the Covid-19 pandemic.

‘Approximately 60% of the adult population is classified as obese and approximately 26% of adults are not active enough for good health. These issues, along with other long-term health conditions, are even more significant in our more deprived areas’ – Greater Norwich Physical Activity & Sport Strategy 2022-27

In addition to physical inactivity and mental wellbeing challenges, health issues can be exacerbated by urban heat stress, flooding and noise/air pollution. Unhealthy lifestyles, obesity and an ageing population in Greater Norwich is expected to increase demand on health and social care services.

Access to green space is recognised in public policy as being important for helping to address health and wellbeing issues, reducing health inequalities and improving social cohesion, and managing the costs of health and social care. This includes parks, woodlands, allotments in urban areas and the wider countryside.

‘Spending time in the natural environment – as a resident or a visitor – improves our mental health and feelings of wellbeing. It can reduce stress, fatigue, anxiety and depression. It can help boost immune systems, encourage physical activity and may reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as asthma. It can combat loneliness and bind communities together’ – UK Government 25-Year Environment Plan



Queen's Hills Community Park © South Norfolk Council

Green infrastructure strategy on a page

Our mission

To work with partners in securing opportunities for nature recovery and enhanced access to nature by supporting the development of Green Infrastructure to take action and help tackle the climate and ecological challenges, and support vibrant, healthy, inclusive and growing communities

Our vision

Greater Norwich has a high quality, nature-rich and resilient Green Infrastructure network connecting greenspaces and the countryside in and around the city of Norwich, surrounding towns and villages. The nature-based benefits of this green network are widely valued by our local communities, businesses and visitors.

Our objectives

- Enabling access to nature and healthy lifestyles
- Harnessing productive landscapes
- Strengthening distinctive places
- Supporting nature recovery
- Promoting urban greening
- Strengthening blue-green infrastructure

Our guiding principles

- ✓ Delivering high quality Green Infrastructure
- ✓ Long-term stewardship
- ✓ Optimising gains and benefits
- ✓ Targeting Green Infrastructure in areas with greatest need/potential
- ✓ Integrating Green Infrastructure into policy
- ✓ Collaborative approach

Our delivery programme themes

- **Active Places** – provision of accessible green spaces and links to support people's physical health and mental wellbeing
- **Natural Places** – provision of nature-rich habitats to support nature recovery and strengthen climate resilience



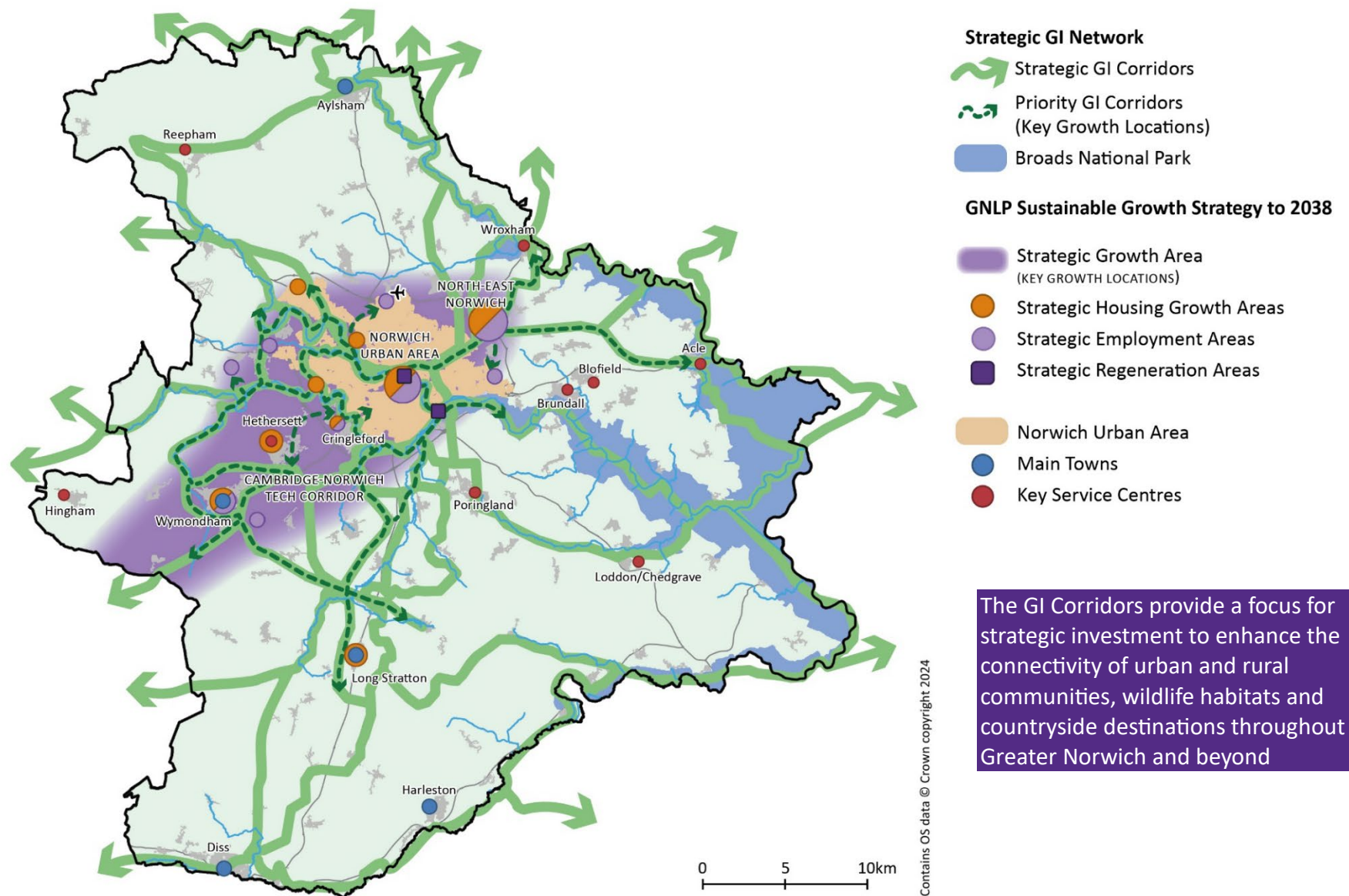
Our outcomes

Healthier, happier and more active people
Nature-rich places
Climate-resilient places
Prosperous communities

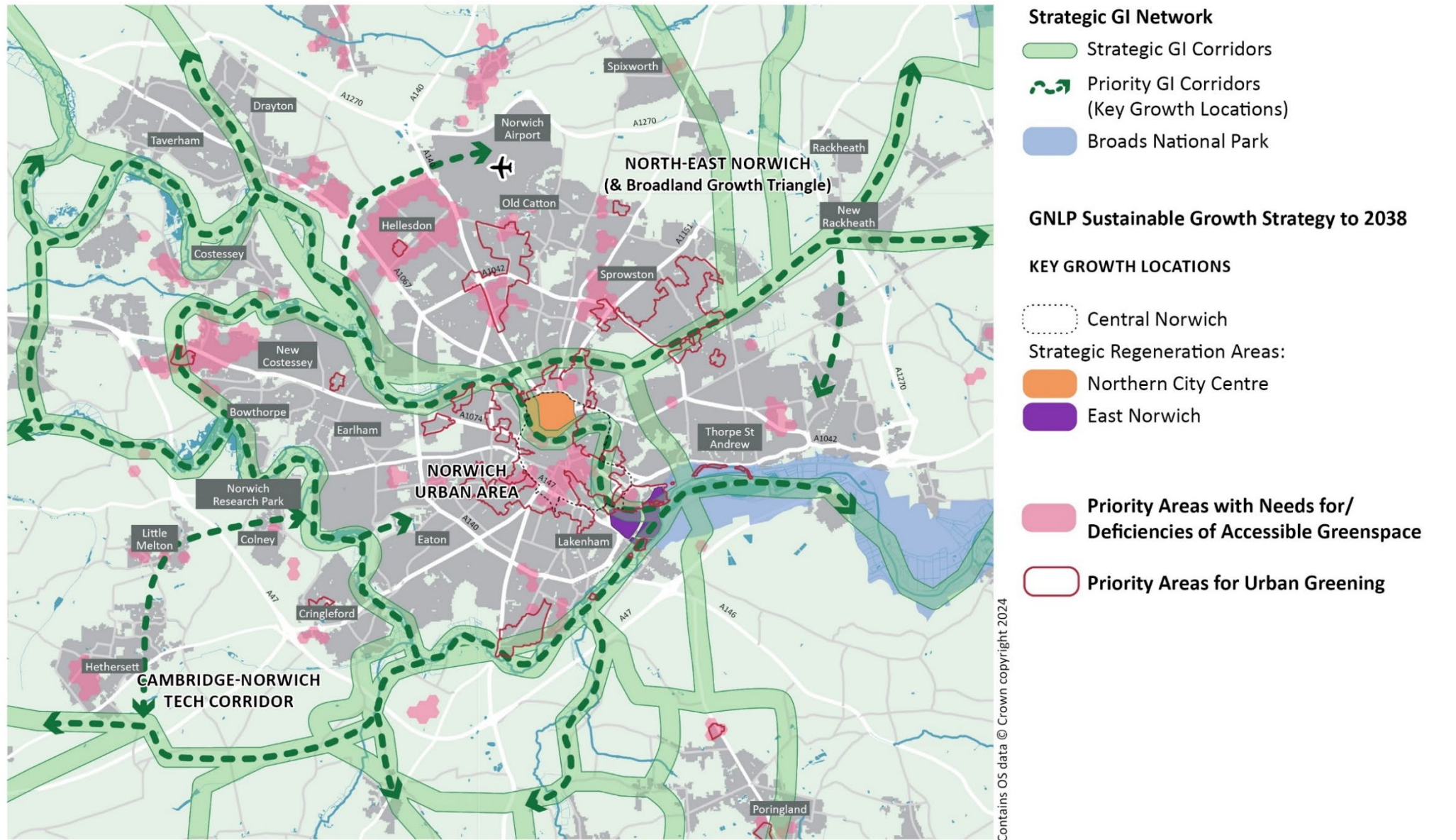


What our strategy looks like – “the big picture”

As set out in Chapter 5, our long-term spatial vision for developing a strategic multi-functional network of Green Infrastructure connecting people, places and nature across Greater Norwich as a whole is illustrated on this map

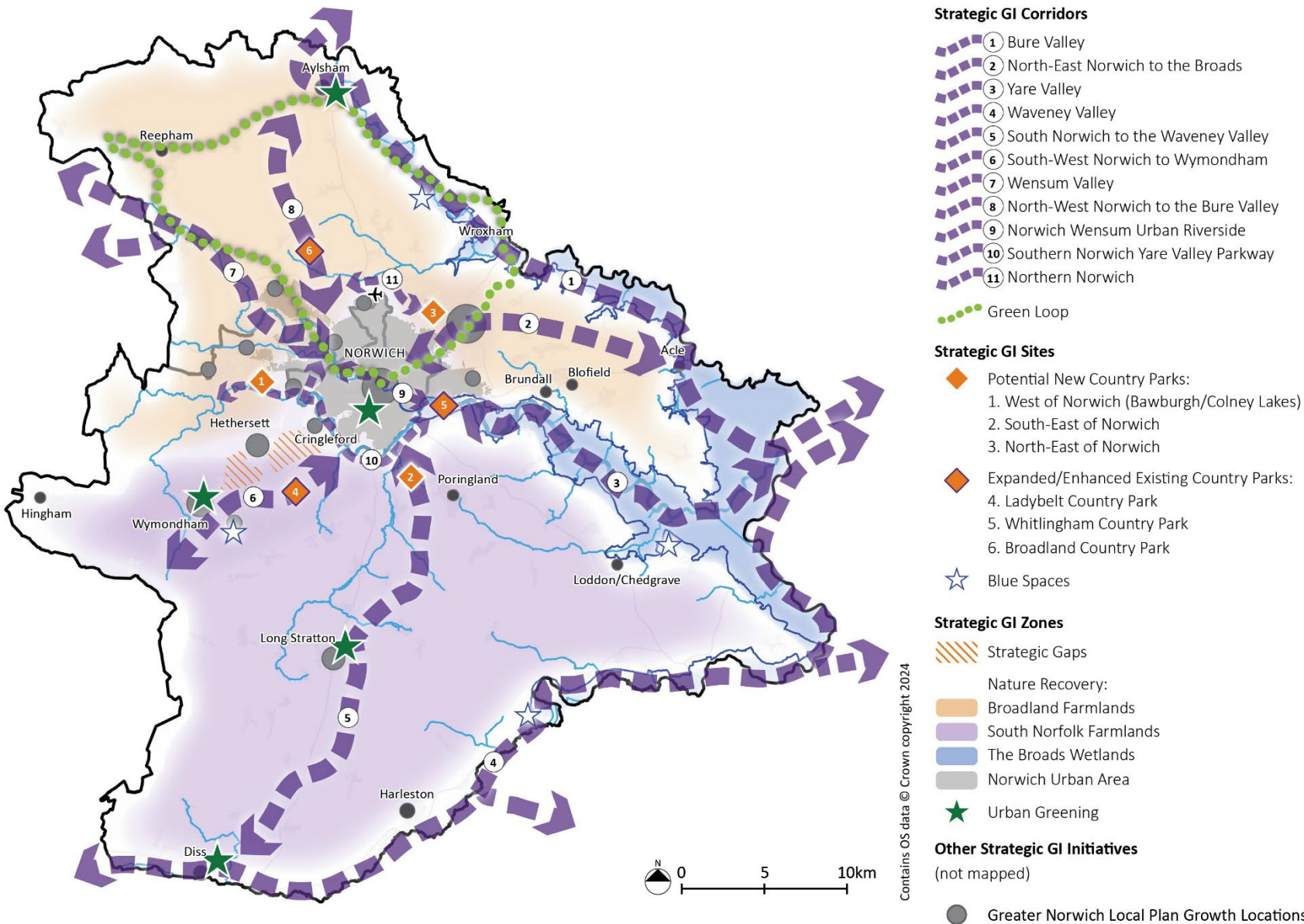


This map illustrates what our long-term spatial vision for developing a strategic multi-functional network of Green Infrastructure connecting people, places and nature in and around Norwich looks like

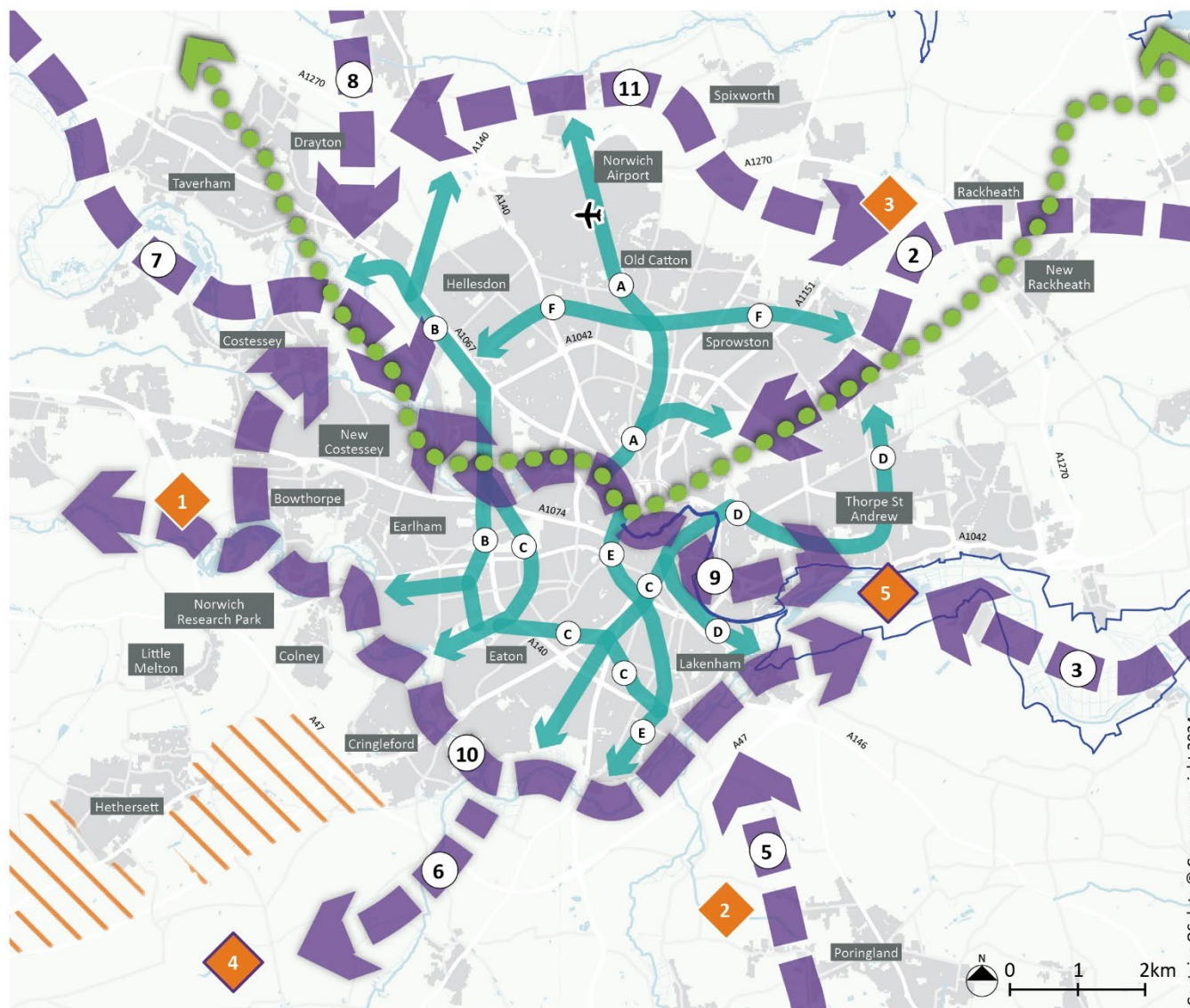


What we will deliver and where

As set out in Chapter 6, this map illustrates our proposed strategic initiatives for protecting, enhancing and expanding the Green Infrastructure network over the next five years across Greater Norwich as a whole (see Strategic Delivery Plan 2025-2030 for details)



This map illustrates our proposed strategic initiatives for protecting, enhancing and expanding the Green Infrastructure network over the next five years in and around Norwich



Strategic GI Corridors

- ② North-East Norwich to the Broads
- ③ Yare Valley
- ⑤ South Norwich to the Waveney Valley
- ⑥ South-West Norwich to Wymondham
- ⑦ Wensum Valley
- ⑧ North-West Norwich to the Bure Valley
- ⑨ Norwich Wensum Urban Riverside
- ⑩ Southern Norwich Yare Valley Parkway
- ⑪ Northern Norwich

● Green Loop

~ Norwich Green Grid Corridors:

- Ⓐ North City
- Ⓑ Wensum Ridges
- Ⓒ Earham and Eaton
- Ⓓ City Ridges
- Ⓔ Lakenham Way
- Ⓕ Hellesdon to Sprowston

Strategic GI Sites

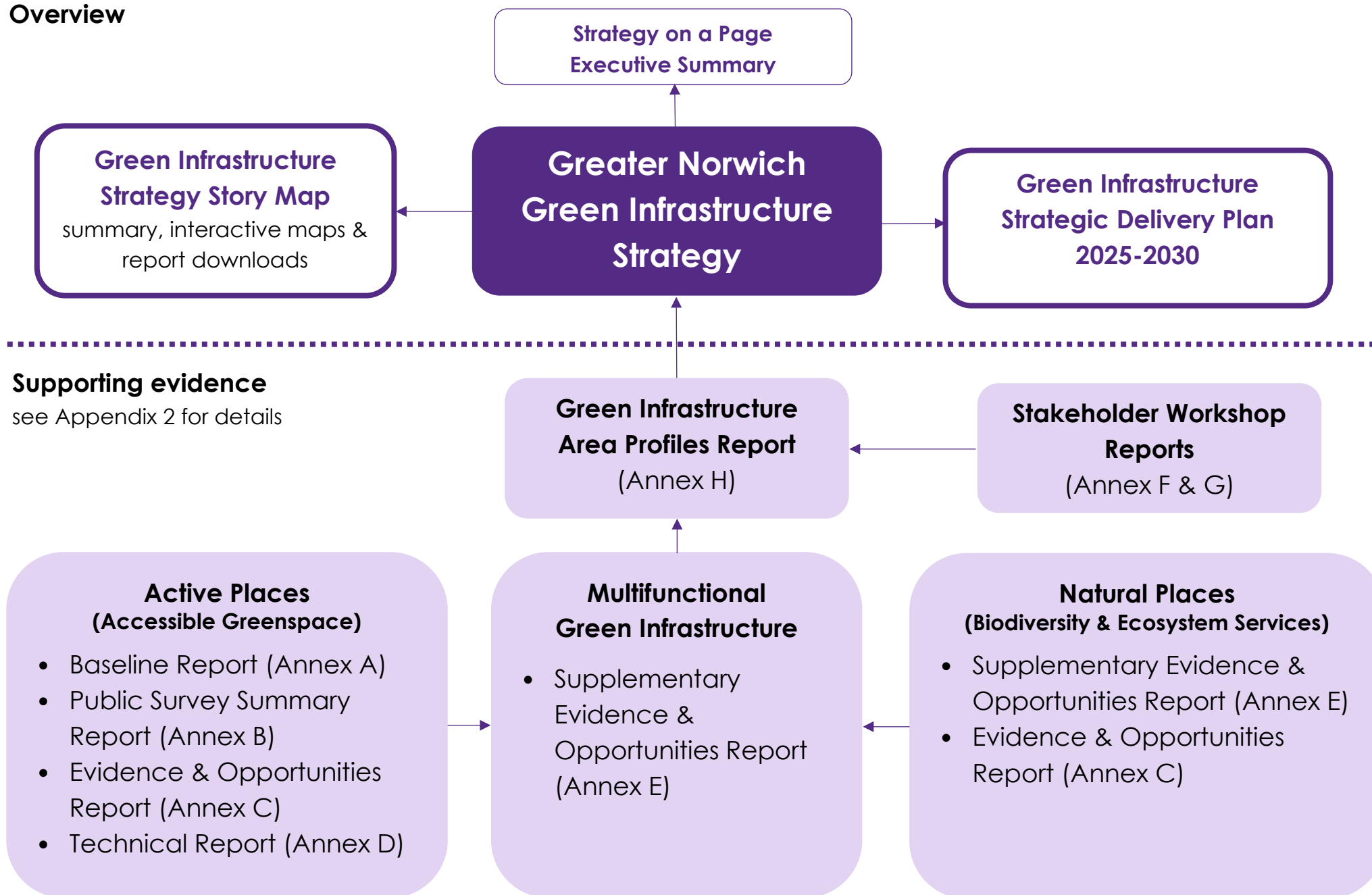
- ◆ Potential New Country Parks:
 1. West of Norwich (Bawburgh/Colney Lakes)
 2. South-East of Norwich
 3. North-East of Norwich
- ◆ Expanded/Enhanced Existing Country Parks:
 4. Ladybelt Country Park
 5. Whitlingham Country Park

Strategic GI Zones

▨ Strategic Gaps

Other Strategic GI Initiatives
(not mapped)

Overview



2. Our mission and vision

Mission

To work with partners in securing opportunities for nature recovery and enhanced access to nature by supporting the development of GI to take action and help tackle the climate and ecological challenges, and support vibrant, healthy, inclusive and growing communities.

Vision

Greater Norwich has a high quality, nature-rich and resilient GI network connecting greenspaces and the countryside in and around the city of Norwich, surrounding towns and villages. The nature-based benefits of this green network are widely valued by our local communities, businesses and visitors.



View of Norwich from Kett's Heights © Paul Rabbitts

The continued development of a multi-functional GI network is integral to the Greater Norwich Local Plan vision and policy framework.

Greater Norwich Local Plan Vision

‘...By 2038 Greater Norwich will have vibrant, healthy, inclusive and growing communities supported by the delivery of new homes, infrastructure and an enhanced environment. Growth will make the best of Greater Norwich’s distinct built, natural and historic environments, whilst protecting and enhancing them.

The development of a multi-functional green infrastructure network will continue across Greater Norwich. This enhanced network will help our communities mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, by providing for biodiversity gain through improved and linked habitats, reducing flood risk and improving opportunities for active travel and leisure. Improved access to the countryside will be provided and the quality of our environmental assets will be enhanced.’

(Source – Extracts from Greater Norwich Local Plan (adopted March 2024))

GI plays a key role in supporting sustainable growth across Greater Norwich as reflected in the following Local Plan policies (see **Appendix 1**):

- Policy 2 - Sustainable Communities
- Policy 3 - Environmental Protection and Enhancement
- Policy 4 - Strategic Infrastructure
- Policy 6 - The Economy
- Policy 7 - Strategy for the Growth Areas

3. What is green infrastructure?

‘Green Infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green space and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity’ (Source – National Planning Policy Framework)

What Green Infrastructure can include

GI can embrace a range of spaces and assets that provide environmental and wider benefits. It can, for example, include parks, playing fields, other areas of open space, woodland, allotments, private gardens, sustainable drainage features, green roofs and walls, street trees and ‘blue infrastructure’ such as streams, ponds, canals and other water bodies.

(Source – National Planning Practice Guidance on the Natural Environment)

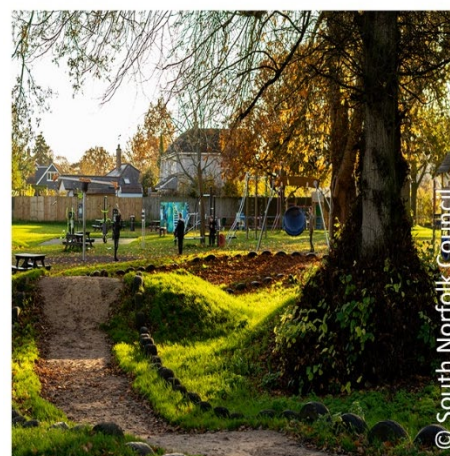
What we mean by greenspace

For the purposes of this GI Strategy, the term “greenspace” is used to describe any natural or semi-natural vegetated areas of land or water. This includes both private greenspace (e.g. grounds of private institutions and domestic gardens) and publicly accessible greenspace.

What we mean by accessible greenspace

“Accessible Greenspace” is green space specifically provided for full public access free and without restrictions (e.g. public open spaces or land with a public right to open access) and green space with conditional or restricted public access (e.g. subject to entrance fees/opening hours).

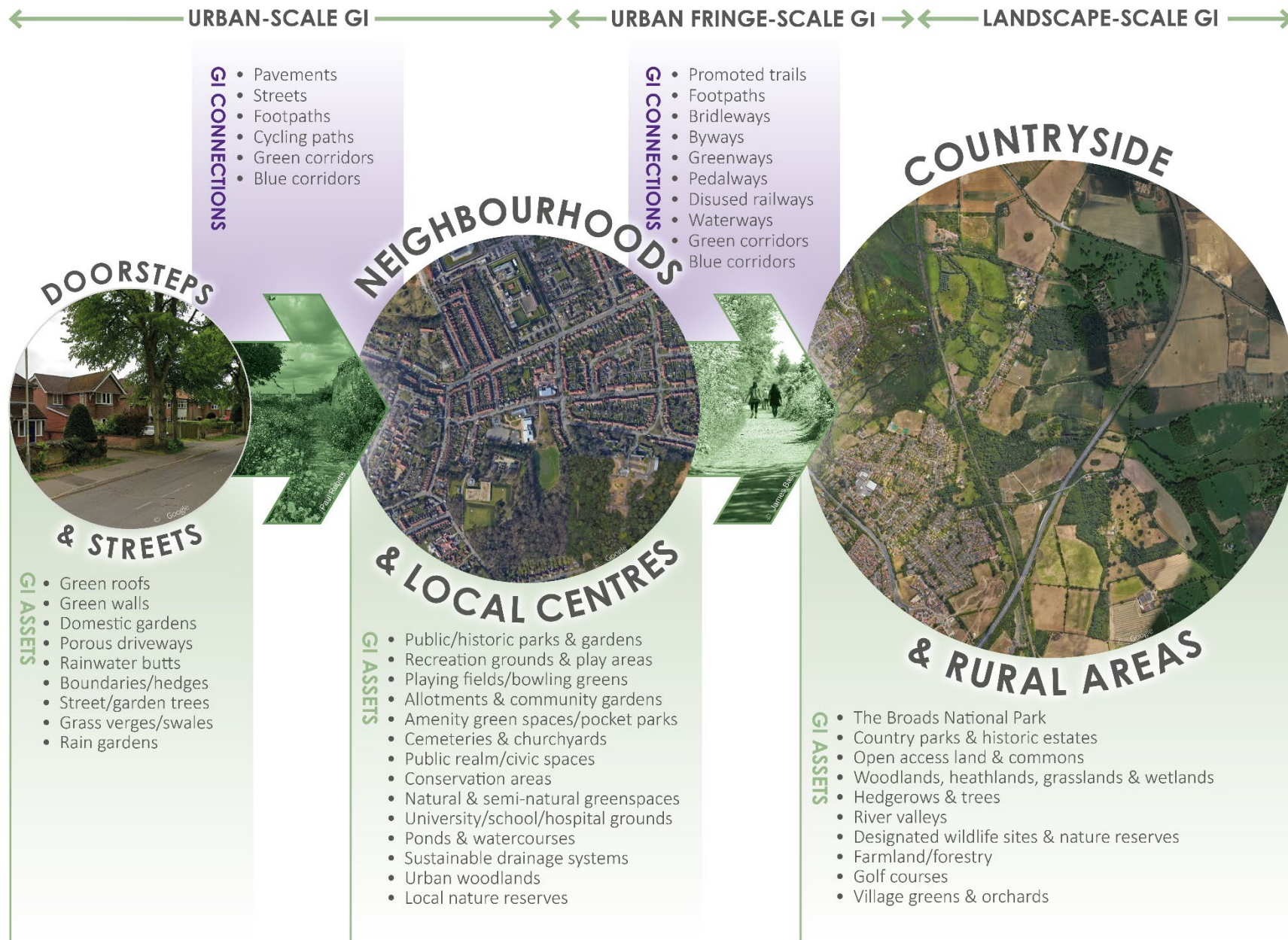
Accessible greenspace should be socially inclusive, safe, welcoming and well-managed.



A variety of different types, locations and scale of GI assets² and connections provide the “building blocks” of the multifunctional GI network linking urban areas and the countryside across Greater Norwich.

²GI Assets are green/blue spaces and natural/semi-natural features that provide valuable ecosystem functions and benefits for people and wildlife.

Green infrastructure network “building blocks”



Source: Adapted from GI Design and Placemaking (Scottish Government, 2011)

Why green infrastructure is important

GI is a natural capital asset that provides multiple benefits, at a range of scales. These benefits are also known as ecosystem services.

(Source – National Planning Practice Guidance on the Natural Environment)

The cost and impact of climate change, biodiversity loss and poor health due to inactivity is potentially huge for society. There is an increasing wealth of evidence available to demonstrate the positive benefits of GI for the planet, nature and our health and wellbeing.

The type, amount and quality of GI, and its proximity to where people live, are important in determining nature-based benefits.



GI Benefits

- **Nature-rich beautiful places** – GI supports nature to recover and thrive everywhere, in towns, cities and countryside, conserving and enhancing natural beauty, wildlife and habitats, geology and soils, and our cultural and personal connections
- **Active and healthy places** – green neighbourhoods, green/blue spaces and green routes support active lifestyles, community cohesion and nature connections that benefit physical and mental health and wellbeing, and quality of life. GI also helps to mitigate health risks such as urban heat stress, noise pollution, flooding and poor air quality
- **Thriving and prospering communities** – GI helps to create and support prospering communities that benefit everyone and adds value by creating high quality environments which are attractive to businesses and investors, create green jobs, support retail and high streets, and to help support the local economy and regeneration
- **Improved water management** – GI reduces flood risk, improves water quality and natural filtration, helps maintain the natural water cycle and sustainable drainage at local and catchment scales, reducing pressures on the water environment and infrastructure, bringing amenity, biodiversity, economic and other benefits
- **Resilient and climate positive places** – GI makes places more resilient and adaptive to climate change and helps to meet zero carbon and air quality targets. GI itself should be designed to adapt to climate change to ensure long term resilience

Source – Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework: Principles & Standards for England (2023)

Key green infrastructure policy drivers

In line with the [25-Year Environment Plan for England](#) published in 2018, [Environmental Improvement Plans](#) set out how the Government's goals for improving the natural environment are to be delivered.

The [Environment Act 2021](#) places a duty on public bodies in England to enhance as well as conserve biodiversity, and to prepare [Local Nature Recovery Strategies](#) to support creation of a national Nature Recovery Network. The Act also introduces mandatory requirements for new development to deliver at least a 10% [Biodiversity Net Gain](#).

The link between Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Biodiversity Net Gain and GI in promoting healthy living and responding to the need to act to address climate and ecological challenges is highlighted by the [Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework – Principles & Standards for England \(2023\)](#).

The Government's [National Planning Policy Framework](#) requires GI to be embedded into local planning policies and considered in development management decisions to support sustainable development goals.

GI also has a key role to play in supporting strategic mitigation measures required under the [Habitats Regulations](#) for development site allocations that impact on designated sites protected under the Habitats Directive.

The [Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023](#) places a duty on relevant authorities to further the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes. The Strategy proposes a number of GI initiatives that help to deliver the aims and objectives of the statutory management plan for the Broads.

³Ecosystem functions are the foundational functions of nature (biodiversity, soil and geodiversity, and water), those most associated with climate (carbon and energy, temperature regulation), functions that help health and wellbeing (access to nature, food, active

Our approach to green infrastructure

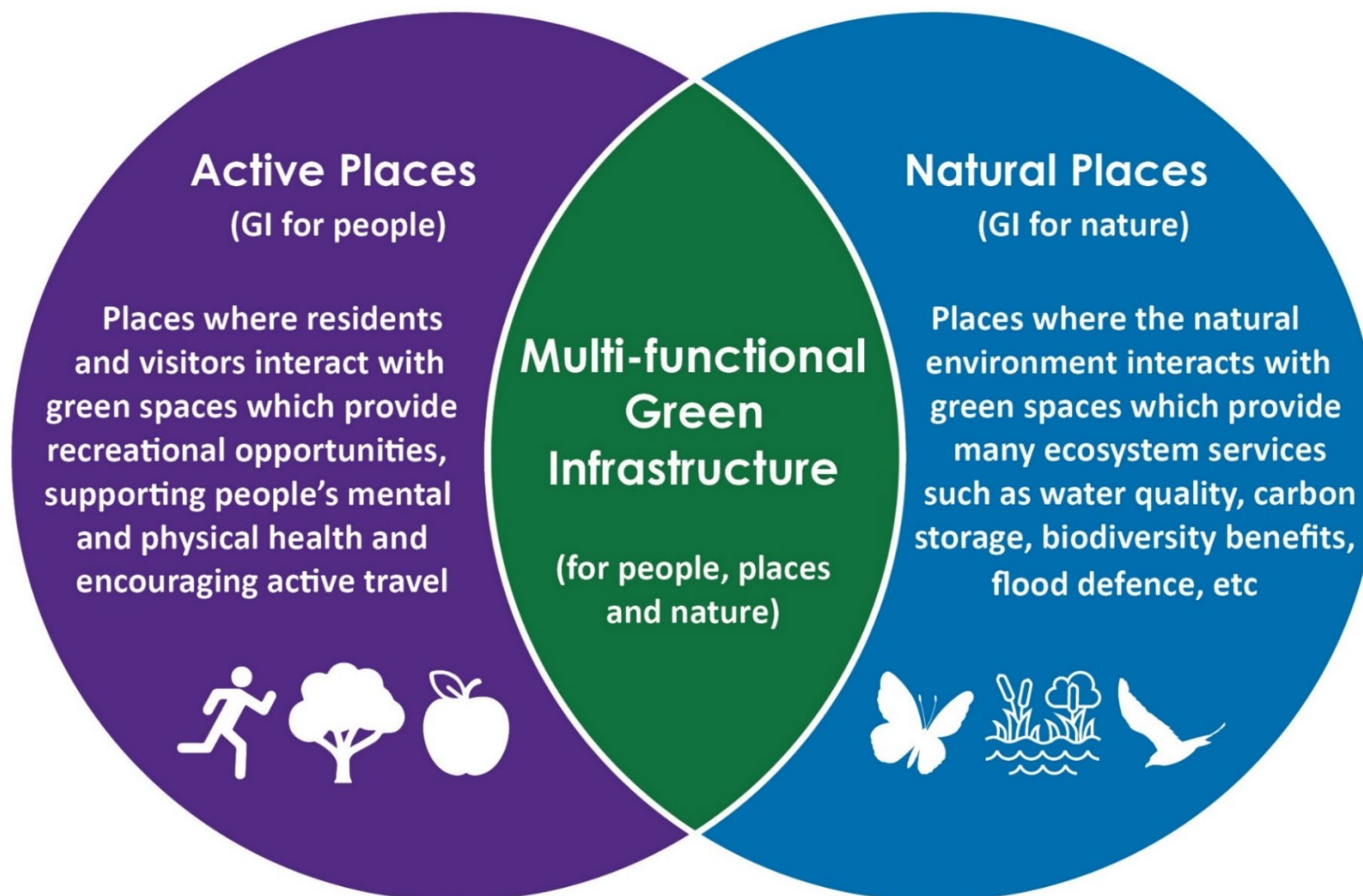
Developed in collaboration with local partners, we have adopted a strategic approach to delivering GI at a Greater Norwich level shaped by the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework's principles.

Our approach to assessing, planning and delivery of multi-functional GI is focussed around the overlapping themes of [active places](#) and [natural places](#). These jointly contribute to GI for people, places and nature that embraces and integrates GI assets, ecosystem functions³ and settings at a range of scales.

Underpinning this approach is a core focus on delivering a GI network for Greater Norwich that is:

- **Multifunctional, varied and connected** – where the potential for multiple ecosystem functions, nature-based solutions and benefits from the same area of GI is optimised by establishing a network with a variety of GI types/sizes, offering connectivity for people and wildlife
- **Accessible and nature friendly** – where people can access and enjoy nature in green spaces and greenways that are inclusive, safe, welcoming, well-managed and accessible for all, and integrated into the local sustainable transport network. At the same time, care is taken to ensure that recreation pressures on valued wildlife sites are mitigated
- **Landscape-led and responsive to character** – where GI is well-designed and managed to strengthen the distinctive natural, historic and cultural character, qualities and sense of place of our landscapes and townscapes that people value

lifestyles, clean air, enhanced soundscapes), and those associated with prosperous communities (including education and sense of place, amongst others).



Evidence based approach

Founded on up-to-date evidence, and stakeholder engagement, the Strategy highlights needs and opportunities for protecting the natural environment and enhancing the provision of multi-functional GI for people and nature in Greater Norwich.

Details of the supporting GI Strategy evidence reports (**Annexes A-E**) can be found in **Appendix 2**.

A wide range of local stakeholders from public, private and third sector organisations in Greater Norwich contributed to the GI Strategy. Our vision, objectives and strategic priorities for GI delivery have been shaped by feedback from the 35 organisations who participated in two stakeholder engagement workshops (see **Annex F** and **G** for details).

Drawing on the evidence and stakeholder feedback, spatial priorities and opportunities for enhancing and expanding the Strategic GI Network across Greater Norwich have been identified for different parts of Greater Norwich (see the GI Area Profiles in **Annex H**).

Story map

The Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy Story Map is an online interactive mapping tool for exploring the area's GI.

The Story Map provides a visual summary of the GI Strategy with links to download the supporting evidence reports. Interactive map layers can be viewed in a variety of combinations and scales for particular locations and themes, to help answer specific questions as required.

www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/reports/green-infrastructure-strategy

Partnership based approach

This Strategy can only be achieved through the combined efforts of partners and stakeholders working together to help deliver our shared vision and objectives for GI.

We have established the Greater Norwich GI Partnership, which brings together the following public, environmental and health sector organisations to accelerate the delivery of GI in the area:

- Active Norfolk
- Broadland District Council
- Broads Authority
- Natural England
- NHS Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care Board
- Norfolk County Council
- Norfolk Wildlife Trust
- Norwich City Council
- Public Health Norfolk
- South Norfolk Council
- University of East Anglia

We have chosen to work together because we believe greater benefits can be achieved by adopting a strategic approach to GI planning and delivery across district boundaries and sectors.

4. What our evidence tells us

What GI we have and where

Drawing on the definition of what GI can include, we have identified and mapped the different types of GI assets that provide the “building blocks” of Greater Norwich’s GI network (**Annex A, C and E**). These are described under the following categories in the GI Baseline Report (**Annex A**):

- **Landscape** (landscape character and land use)
- **Natural Environment**⁴ (sites designated for nature)
- **Trees and Woodland** (woodlands, trees outside of woodland, ancient woodland and canopy coverage)
- **Historic Environment** (registered parks and gardens, scheduled monuments and conservation areas/listed buildings)
- **Green Spaces** (parks and gardens; outdoor sport facilities, cemeteries/religious grounds, allotments, community gardens and city farms, etc)
- **Public Rights of Way** (footpaths, bridleways and byways, and trails)
- **Water** (access to water via waterside paths and greenspaces)

Geospatial environmental data has been collated and captured in a Geographical Information System (GIS) and used to establish a GI baseline map for Greater Norwich (this can be viewed on the Story Map).

In overview, Greater Norwich is a predominantly rural area - 71% is agricultural land, 11% is built-up and 18% is considered to be GI (habitats/water).

The Greater Norwich landscape is varied with a wealth of natural and cultural assets. These include:

- The fens and marshes of the Broads in the east – part of the Broads National Park, a nationally protected wetland landscape of international importance for wildlife

- A more intimate landscape of small fields and hedgerows that provide the setting of the Broads
- Rolling landscapes of varied geology with woodland, heath and former parkland estates in the west and north
- An extensive open clay plateau in the south
- Distinctive river valleys of the Wensum, Yare, Waveney and Bure (and their associated tributaries including the Tiffey, Tas and Chet)
- The urban landscapes of the Norwich Urban Area (including the historic medieval city centre), rural market towns/villages and strategic countryside gaps between settlements

Current provision of some of our key GI assets in the Greater Norwich Area is highlighted below, benchmarked against the Greater Cambridge Area.

Area	Tree Canopy Cover	Local Nature Reserves	Public Parks & Gardens
Greater Norwich Area (c.150,300 Ha)	16.5% ¹	0.22% ¹	0.26% ¹
Broadland District (55,328 Ha)	19.8% ¹	0.008% ¹	0.24% ¹
Norwich City (4,052 Ha)	25.1% ¹	3.46% ¹	2.17% ¹
South Norfolk (90,895 Ha)	14.1% ¹	0.21% ¹	0.19% ¹
Greater Cambridge Area (94,240 Ha)	15% ²	0.14% ²	0.13% ²

Data sources: ¹Annex A; ²Greater Cambridge Open Spaces Data (2023)

⁴Habitat baseline is mapped in **Annex E**

What multi-functional GI looks like

As illustrated below, our GI assets have the potential to supply a range of **ecosystem functions** that can provide multiple **benefits** for people, places and nature across Greater Norwich.

GI Benefits	Nature-rich beautiful places		Active & healthy places					Thriving & prospering communities		Improved water management			Resilient & climate positive places	
	Biodiversity and pollination	Soils and geodiversity	Food	Access to nature	Active lifestyles	Air quality regulation	Noise and soundscapes	Education and volunteering	Sense of place	Water supply	Flood regulation	Water quality	Carbon storage and energy	Temperature regulation
Greater Norwich GI Assets														
Urban/country public parks and gardens														
Domestic gardens														
Natural and semi-natural green spaces ⁵														
Designated wildlife sites ⁶														
Blue spaces ⁷														
Greenways ⁸														
Open access land														
Outdoor sports facilities ⁹														
Amenity green spaces														
Play spaces ¹⁰														
School (and other institution) grounds														
Cemeteries and churchyards														
Food growing and productive spaces ¹¹														
Public realm/civic spaces ¹²														
Green corridors														

⁵woodland, trees outside of woodland, hedgerows, heathland, wetland and semi-natural grassland habitats

⁶SPA/SAC/SSSI/CWS/LNR

⁷waterways/watercourses, waterbodies (reservoirs, lakes and ponds)

⁸off-road/traffic-free walking and cycling routes, public rights of way

⁹playing fields, bowling greens, tennis courts, golf courses (excluding artificial surface pitches)

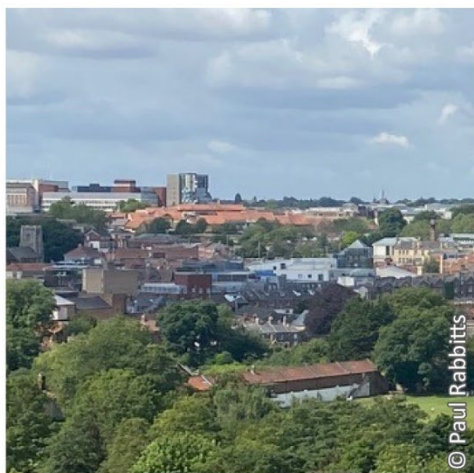
¹⁰excluding play areas with artificial surfaces

¹¹allotments, community gardens/orchards, agricultural land, forestry land

¹²urban street trees, roadside verges, green walls, green roofs, sustainable drainage systems

5. What our strategy looks like

Our GI strategy aims to support sustainable growth across Greater Norwich by harnessing the power of the natural environment to enrich people's lives, and promoting nature-based solutions to tackling climate, ecological and health challenges.



In line with our vision for GI in Greater Norwich, the desired outcomes from the strategy are for:

- **Healthier, happier and more active people** – access to good quality GI (green spaces, parks, recreational, walking and cycling routes) that are inclusive, safe, welcoming, well-managed and accessible for all, will lead to more people having contact with nature close to where they live and work, thus providing greater opportunities for active travel, lifelong learning and healthy lifestyles
- **Nature-rich places** – GI supports nature to recover and thrive; our most valuable areas for wildlife are protected and wider environmental benefits are gained by increasing nature-rich green cover in our urban areas and the countryside
- **Climate-resilient places** – GI helps places be more resilient and adaptive to climate change through nature-based solutions for reducing temperatures during heat waves, soaking up rain water to help reduce flooding, and storing carbon. GI also helps contribute to net zero carbon targets and climate change mitigation by supporting active travel
- **Prosperous communities** – GI underpins a prosperous and thriving local economy; it helps create and support distinctive green neighbourhoods and high-quality and attractive environments for retail areas, high streets and business parks. GI also helps contribute to well-designed, managed and sustainable rural tourism destinations.

Our key objectives

To achieve our outcomes, we will work in partnership with stakeholders and communities across Greater Norwich towards the delivery of six key GI objectives, which together address local needs and the strategic priorities of our partners.

The range of current and emerging local biodiversity, access, health, planning, water and other environmental related strategies/plans that link to our GI objectives are highlighted in **Appendix 3**.



Sweet Briar Marshes in Norwich © Rachel Murray

1. Enabling access to nature and healthy lifestyles

This is about enabling more people in Greater Norwich to experience and connect with nature and be physically active

Evidence shows that time spent in nature not only make us feel better emotionally, it also contributes to our physical wellbeing by reducing blood pressure, heart rate and stress levels.

Spending time outdoors in nature, whether to relax and re-charge, engage in green activities (such as conservation volunteering, community food growing or learning new skills) or participate in physical activities, can provide important health and wellbeing benefits.

These benefits are recognised by the NHS Green Social Prescribing Toolkit, which promotes nature-based interventions that can positively impact on happiness and wellbeing by reducing social isolation and connecting with nature – particularly in people likely to be experiencing health inequalities.

We want to enable more people in urban areas to use green spaces close to where they live, work and learn, and to benefit from opportunities to access the wider countryside on foot and by bike.

We need to focus on addressing health inequalities by providing more equitable and socially inclusive, safe and welcoming accessible greenspaces for those who need the health benefits the most – especially those living in our most deprived areas, the over 50s, people with disabilities and ethnic minorities.

We want to empower communities to get more involved in the long-term stewardship and care of their local public open spaces.

The GI Strategy has a key role to play in supporting delivery of the ‘active environments’ theme of the Greater Norwich Physical Activity & Sport Strategy 2022-2027, and the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan 2019–2029.

Desired outcomes

- Healthier, happier and more active people
- Prosperous communities

2. Harnessing productive landscapes

This is about harnessing the potential of productive landscapes in Greater Norwich to connect people with food growing and climate change action

Productive landscapes refer to the provision of food, fresh water, timber and energy from an area's natural resources.

Promoting the health and wellbeing benefits of community food growing initiatives can encourage healthy living, reduce food poverty and strengthen connections with the wider rural economy and farming sector.

We want to bring together regenerative farming with allotments, community gardens/orchards, farmers' markets and food co-operatives as part of a sustainable local food system for Greater Norwich. This not only encourages healthy eating and community food-growing, but also reduces food miles and carbon footprints via sustainable production, processing and distribution of food.

Allotments, small holdings, orchards and community gardens offer opportunities to gain skills (by learning about gardening, vegetable and fruit growing, beekeeping and horticulture), as well as providing places and activities that bring communities together and encourage active lifestyles.

The Strategy also supports initiatives for harnessing the area's farmland, woodland and natural resources to contribute to net zero carbon emission targets and climate change mitigation through renewable and low carbon energy generation – such as generating biogas from timber/green waste biofuels and incorporating biosolar roofs onto buildings or structures.

Desired outcomes

- Healthier, happier and more active people
- Nature-rich places
- Climate-resilient places

3. Strengthening distinctive places

This is about promoting the role of good GI in contributing to the distinctive landscape character of places and spaces within Greater Norwich

Landscape character is the pattern of features, elements and experiential qualities that combine to make places distinctive from each other.

Well-designed and well-managed green spaces and other GI assets contribute positively to making and sustaining distinctive places.

Developing GI proposals based on a sound understanding of the natural and cultural elements, including valued views, that contribute to an area's sense of place is essential in order to strengthen local distinctiveness.

We want to harness the potential of good GI design and urban greening to help create attractive parks and green settings for homes, schools and businesses, and high-quality green space destinations.

Desired outcomes

- Healthier, happier and more active people
- Prosperous communities



River Yare east of Norwich © Simon Finlay

4. Supporting nature recovery

This is about supporting initiatives for enhancing, expanding and protecting our habitats and most important wildlife sites across Greater Norwich

Nature recovery refers to halting and reversing the loss of species and habitats by providing more, bigger, better and joined up nature-rich habitat networks.

Supporting other strategies and initiatives that promote nature recovery, delivering net gain for biodiversity from new developments and protecting international sites across Greater Norwich is integral to the GI approach.

The Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) identifies how and where to recover nature and improve the natural environment. It sets out priorities for enhancing designated wildlife sites, and for creating and restoring nature-rich habitats that help wildlife populations to recover, grow, move, thrive and adapt to a changing climate.

Biodiversity Net Gain is a way of making sure that wildlife habitat is in a better state than it was before development. Providing at least 10% BNG, on or off-site, is now mandatory for most planning applications. As well as identifying priority areas for habitat improvements, the LNRS sets out strategic locations for off-site BNG proposals.

Both LNRS and BNG are legal requirements under the Environment Act 2021, which will help the GNGB partner authorities achieve their legal duty to enhance as well as conserve biodiversity.

This GI Strategy contributes to delivery of the Norfolk LNRS by highlighting potential opportunities for creating and restoring woodland, wetland, heathland and semi-natural grassland, and other wildlife habitats across Greater Norwich (see **Annex E**).

⁵Habitats Sites (aka Natura 2000 Sites) include Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation of European importance designated under the Habitats Directive, and Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention).

The Strategy also supports the Norfolk Green Infrastructure & Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy by highlighting opportunities for provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) required to mitigate recreation pressures on Habitats Sites⁵ from additional housing growth planned in Greater Norwich to 2038.

SANG can be provided as new/expanded country parks designed in line with Natural England's SANG criteria.

Potential opportunities for large and small-scale country park provision based around woodland and waterbodies include: Broadland Country Park north of Norwich near Horsford; Bawburgh/Colney Lakes west of Norwich; Ladybelt Country Park in East Carleton south west of Norwich; and to the south east of Norwich in the Caistor St Edmund area.

Desired outcomes

- Nature-rich places
- Climate-resilient places



Broadland Country Park in Broadland District © Broadland District Council

5. Promoting urban greening

This is about strengthening the resilience, sustainability and biodiversity value of urban environments in Greater Norwich

Urban greening is a nature-based approach to creating nature-rich towns and cities by increasing green cover on the ground, buildings and other infrastructure, and by expanding tree canopy cover.

‘Greening up’ our urban areas will enable these places to adapt as hotter, dryer summers and more extreme downpours become more frequent.

As opportunities to create green spaces within densely built-up urban areas may be limited by pressures to use land for other uses, new development increasingly needs to include nature-based urban greening solutions.

Buildings, streets and the public realm will need to become greener and more climate resilient. For example, roofs and walls covered in plants (particularly on civic, educational and commercial buildings), living green screens to enhance air quality (e.g. for schools adjacent to highways) and street trees and small pocket parks between buildings.

Greening of urban greenspace, streets and buildings not only contributes to strengthening sense of place and townscape character, but can also help provide ecosystem services that are essential for sustainable urban living.

In addition to the well-being benefits of exposure to greenery, expanding green cover can help address climate change by storing carbon, managing flooding and regulating extreme temperatures, air and noise pollution.

Long-term funding for maintenance of urban greening features is critical.

Desired outcomes

- Healthier, happier and more active people
- Nature-rich places
- Climate-resilient places
- Prosperous communities

6. Strengthening blue-green infrastructure

This is about harnessing the potential of blue-green infrastructure and water within Greater Norwich as an integral element of the GI network

Blue-green infrastructure refers to the use of watercourses, waterbodies, wetlands, floodplains and sustainable drainage systems alongside trees, woodlands and parks in urban land use planning.

As part of an integrated approach to climate-resilient water management, blue-green infrastructure can deliver benefits for people and nature.

Blue-green infrastructure can help strengthen the resilience of urban environments to climate change by soaking up rain water and reducing flood risk. It also contributes to reversing urbanisation effects by reducing the extent of sealed surfaces, allowing more water to infiltrate into soils. This “sponge effect” slows the flow and improves the quality of water.

We promote the use of Natural Flood Management approaches that mimic the natural ‘regulating’ function of catchments, rivers and floodplains. We also advocate the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as part of an integrated approach to water management, landscape design and placemaking in ways that brings water into people’s daily lives.

Where vegetated, SuDS offer a nature-based solution for improving resilience to surface water flood risk events due to climate change, whilst providing biodiversity and amenity benefits. For example:

- Creation of wetland habitats near proposed housing developments
- Creation of front gardens with grass and permeable driveways
- Integrating linear SuDS along the verges of highways/residential streets

Desired outcomes

- Nature-rich places
- Climate-resilient places

Our strategic GI network – “the big picture”

These indicative maps illustrate what our long-term vision and strategy for a strategic GI network connecting people, places and nature in Greater Norwich looks like.

Strategic GI Corridors⁶

The network of multi-functional Strategic GI Corridors shown on Map 5.1 provides a spatial framework for integrating nature recovery, accessible greenspace and water networks at all scales within Greater Norwich.

These existing and proposed corridors provide a focus for strategic GI investment to enhance the connectivity of urban and rural communities, wildlife habitats and countryside destinations throughout Greater Norwich and beyond.

In addition to defining landscape and townscape structure, the Strategic GI Corridors have a key role to play as bridges to the countryside and as gateways to Norwich and other settlements.



⁶Source – Norfolk GI Network Mapping supporting the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework

Priority GI Corridors

As indicated on Map 5.1, a network of Priority GI Corridors supports the Greater Norwich Local Plan’s strategy for sustainable growth to 2038.

Delivery of enhanced and new GI provision (including SANG) will be targeted in and around these corridors to support the Key Growth Locations.

With the exception of Long Stratton, the Key Growth Locations are within the Greater Norwich Strategic Growth Area, where the majority of strategic scale housing and employment areas will be located.

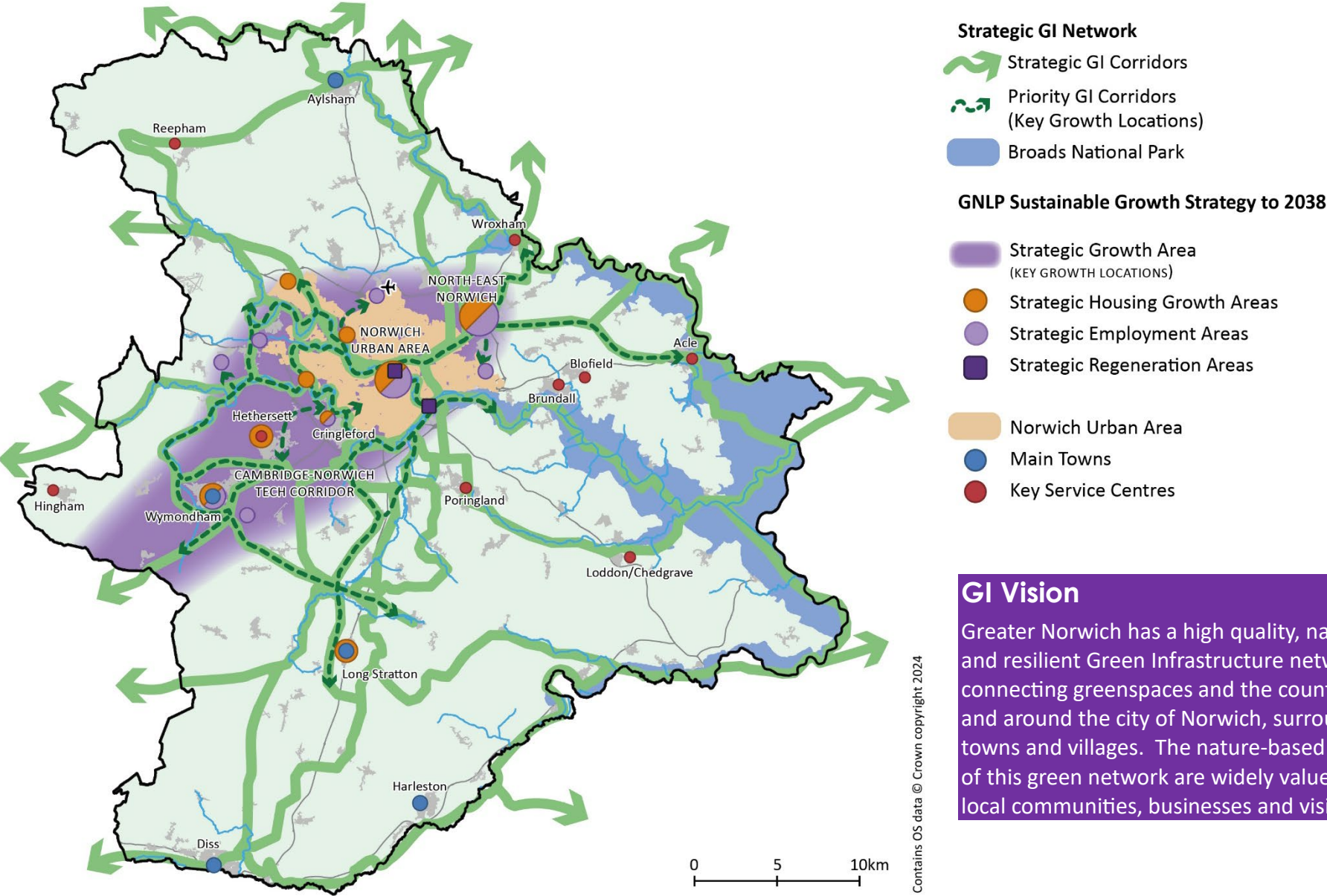
Strategic Growth Area – Key Growth Locations

- **Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor** – Norwich Research Park, Hethel Technology Park and Browick Park, and significant residential expansions of Cringleford, Hethersett and Wymondham
- **Norwich Urban Area** – Central Norwich and the strategic regeneration areas at East Norwich and the Northern City Centre
- **North-East Norwich** – Norwich Airport, major commercial development along the A140 and the Broadland Growth Triangle (including major strategic housing and commercial development)

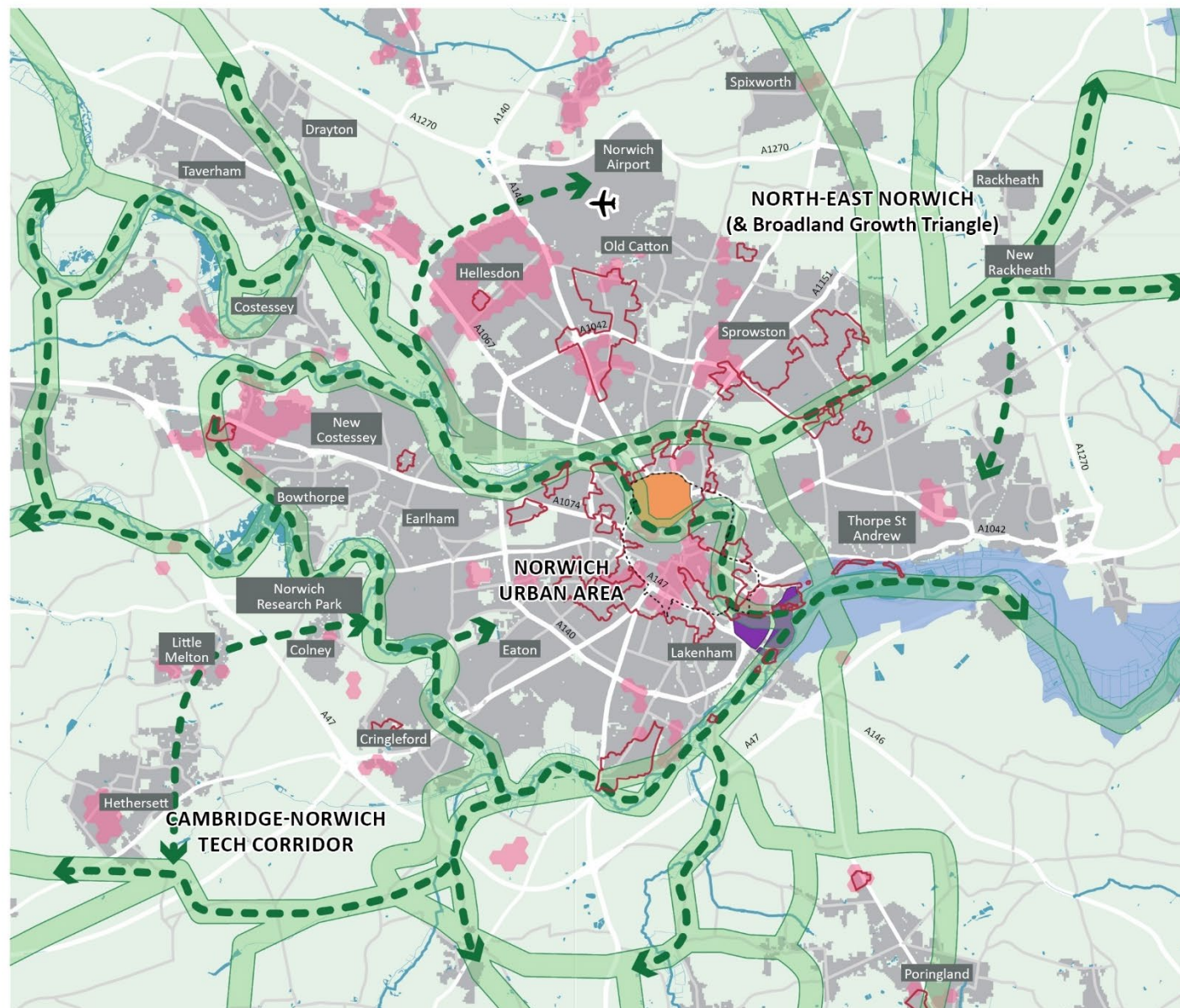
(Source – Greater Norwich Local Plan adopted March 2024)

Map 5.2 indicates priority areas for accessible greenspace and urban greening in the Norwich Urban Area & Fringes where our evidence in **Annex C** suggests there are greatest needs to address deficiencies in provision. The priority areas for accessible greenspace are locations with the greatest demand for and deficiencies in accessible greenspace.

Map 5.1 – Greater Norwich Strategic GI Network



Map 5.2 – Greater Norwich Strategic GI Network : Norwich Urban Area & Fringes



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Strategic GI Network

- Strategic GI Corridors
- - - Priority GI Corridors (Key Growth Locations)
- Broadland National Park

GNLP Sustainable Growth Strategy to 2038

KEY GROWTH LOCATIONS

- Central Norwich

Strategic Regeneration Areas:

- Northern City Centre
- East Norwich

- Priority Areas with Needs for/ Deficiencies of Accessible Greenspace

- Priority Areas for Urban Greening

Our strategic priorities and opportunities for GI

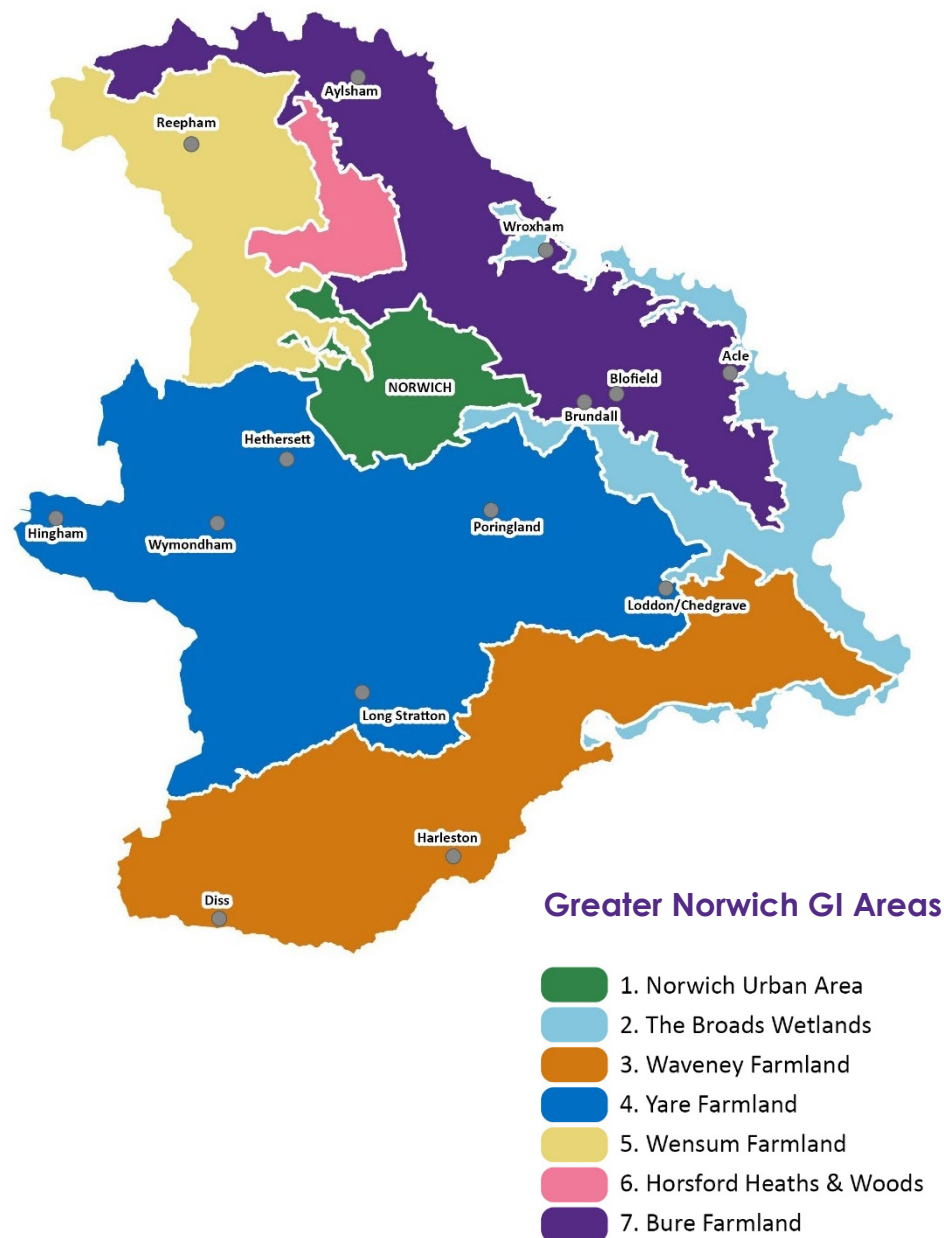
There has never been a more important time to act and harness the potential of GI to help address the challenges of climate change, restoring nature and improving health.

GI offers nature-based solutions to these challenges through the creation of nature-rich and climate resilient places that support vibrant, healthy, inclusive and growing communities.

Drawing on our evidence and feedback from stakeholder engagement, we have identified a range of spatial priorities and opportunities for enhancing and expanding the Strategic GI Network across Greater Norwich – see the GI Area Profiles for details (**Annex H**).

Our key strategic priorities for GI at a Greater Norwich level are:

- Embedding GI into the Northern City Centre and East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Areas
- Embedding GI into the Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor Strategic Growth Area
- Embedding GI into the North-East Norwich Strategic Growth Area
- Tackling health inequalities for urban and rural communities
- Addressing deficiencies in accessible greenspace provision
- Strengthening the network of greenways to support active travel
- Promoting urban greening of the built environment to support healthy living, urban nature recovery and climate change resilience
- Improving habitat connectivity and supporting landscape-scale nature recovery to strengthen climate change resilience



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6. How we will deliver our strategy

We cannot deliver this Strategy on our own. It can only be achieved through the combined efforts of other partners and stakeholders from across the public, private and third sectors in Greater Norwich working together to help deliver our shared vision and objectives for GI.

We established a strong public, environmental and health sector partnership to drive forward the strategy for delivery of GI to support growth in Greater Norwich comprising:

- Active Norfolk
- Broads Authority
- Natural England
- NHS Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care Board
- Norfolk County Council (Chair)
- Norfolk Wildlife Trust
- Norwich City Council
- Public Health Norfolk
- South Norfolk and Broadland Councils
- University of East Anglia

The **Greater Norwich GI Programme Team (GIPT)** has responsibility for implementation and monitoring of the GI Strategy and Strategic Delivery Plan on behalf of the above partners. The GIPT comprises:

- Active Norfolk
- Broads Authority
- Greater Norwich Project Team
- Norfolk County Council
- Norwich City Council
- Public Health Norfolk
- South Norfolk and Broadland Councils

Our delivery principles

Everything we do will be underpinned by six guiding principles:

Principle 1: Delivering high quality GI

We support well-designed GI that is multi-functional, varied, connected, accessible and responds to a place's character in line with Natural England's principles

Principle 2: Long-term stewardship

We encourage developers to involve communities in the long-term stewardship of GI assets to ensure that they are valued, well-managed and funded to deliver benefits and value for future generations

Principle 3: Optimising gains and benefits

We promote the securing of net gains for biodiversity alongside wider environmental benefits from nature recovery – such as landscape, access to nature and sustainable water management

Principle 4: Targeting GI in areas with greatest need/potential

We will seek to target GI investment and raise awareness in areas with greatest health inequalities, high levels of deprivation and greenspace deficiencies – particularly where GI provision is scarce or of low quality

Principle 5: Integrating GI into policy

We will work with our partners to promote GI as a key asset at all scales in local strategies by fully integrating the benefits of GI into social, health and economic policies – not only environmental policy

Principle 6: Collaborative approach

We will work in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders to deliver our GI vision and objectives (including local communities, developers, businesses, land owners and the health, climate and transport sectors)

Our strategic delivery plan 2025-2030

We will focus our work over the next five years through a delivery programme shaped by the GI Strategy's themes:

- **Active Places** – provision of accessible green spaces and links to support people's physical health and mental wellbeing
- **Natural Places** – provision of nature-rich habitats to support nature recovery and strengthen climate resilience

Our programme embraces a range of **Strategic GI Initiatives** for delivery of multi-functional GI that will provide benefits for people, places and nature across Greater Norwich.

Together, these Strategic Initiatives provide a flexible framework for bringing forward projects that will help achieve our GI priorities.

The delivery programme and proposed Strategic GI Initiatives (including timescales and lead delivery organisations) are set out in the Strategic Delivery Plan 2025-2030, which also includes details of our approach to GI project prioritisation and monitoring.



Cringleford Meadow © Fisheye Images

Funding

Delivery of this Strategy will be predominantly reliant on external funding, notably from the Government. The multi-functional nature of GI means it can be funded through a variety of potential sources and opportunities.

Developer contributions

Greater Norwich Community Infrastructure Levy

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which can be levied by Local Authorities on new developments in their area. It is an important tool for Local Authorities to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area.

The three Greater Norwich district authorities currently pool their strategic CIL income into a shared Infrastructure Investment Fund, which is then allocated to support infrastructure across the Greater Norwich area. GI is eligible for CIL funding.

Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy

A minimum of 15% of the CIL that is received by each district authority is currently given to Parish or Town Councils. This amount rises to 25% when a Neighbourhood Development Plan is in place. The funding is known as Neighbourhood CIL (NCIL) and is intended to support development at a local/community level. It is for the individual Parish and Town Councils to agree how neighbourhood CIL is spent within their areas.

Greater Norwich Habitats Sites Mitigation Contributions

Policy 3 (Environmental Protection & Enhancement) of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (adopted March 2024) requires a contribution from new homes towards the costs of direct mitigation measures to address visitor pressure impacts on sites protected under the Habitats Regulations.

It also requires a contribution from new homes and other types of non-residential development towards the costs of nutrient neutrality mitigation measures to address pollution impacts on Habitats Sites. Larger developments should provide on-site GI in addition to these contributions.



The Bure Valley © South Norfolk Council

National Lottery Funding

The National Lottery Heritage Fund currently offers grant funding for GI through strategic initiatives that address long-standing issues at scale, support coordinated cross-territory approaches and accelerate new ideas.

Of particular note is the **Nature Towns and Cities** initiative. Backed by a partnership between the National Lottery, the National Trust and Natural England, this provides capacity-building grants, support and an accreditation scheme to help UK local authority and community partnerships transform access to green space in urban areas and bring nature closer to home.

The **Landscape Connections** initiative currently provides funding for nature recovery, supporting rural economies and connecting people to the UK's most treasured landscapes, including National Parks such as The Broads.

Government funding

Capital funding for large-scale tree planting or nature-based solutions (e.g. natural flood management) is available to rural landowners through Environmental Land Management grant schemes. The Government's Active Travel Fund is also of relevance to GI. Other sources of Government capital grant-funding may also be available.

Green finance

With increasing emphasis on the environment and climate change, new revenue streams based principally on ecosystem services – such as enhancing biodiversity, carbon sequestration and nutrient offsetting – are becoming a key way for farmers and landowners to generate additional income from natural capital, alongside food production and forestry.

Selling statutory **Biodiversity Credits** to developers who are unable to use on-site or off-site credits to deliver BNG offer a guaranteed source of income from management of new habitats over a 30-year period or longer.

Nutrient Neutrality Credits for nature and land-based solutions such as wetlands and woodlands are currently provided through Norfolk Environmental Credits. A similar credit system may also be available from Water Resource East. It is expected that commercial providers will enter the nutrient neutrality market over time.

Investing in nature-based solutions is also now perceived as a reputational necessity by many private sector companies, and there is increasing demand for investing in voluntary Biodiversity Credits and **Carbon Credits** for Environmental, Social and Governance reasons.



Planning and development management

Improving and extending the GI network is integral to supporting the key growth locations and scale of development proposed by the Greater Norwich Local Plan to 2038.

Greater Norwich Local Plan GI Policy

There is extensive coverage of GI in the Greater Norwich Local Plan (adopted March 2024). Both the policies and supporting text (see **Appendix 1**) make it clear that this updated GI Strategy should be used as part of the Local Plan. The key policy references are:

Policy 3 - Environmental Protection and Enhancement

Development proposals should enhance the natural environment through: provision of new, or conservation or enhancement of existing, green infrastructure to contribute (directly or indirectly) to the strategic green infrastructure network having regard to local green infrastructure strategies. In addition, development will deliver net biodiversity gain through the provision of on-site or off-site natural features, creating new or enhancing existing green infrastructure networks that have regard to local green infrastructure strategies.

Policy 4 - Strategic Infrastructure

In line with other policies in this plan, a multi-functional strategic green infrastructure network will be further developed as set out in maps 8A and B and in green infrastructure strategy updates.

To support the GI requirements in the Local Plan policies, we will consider developing a **GI planning checklist** (either standalone or as part of a Supplementary Planning Document) to help ensure that GI is fully considered and integrated into development proposals by applicants. The checklist would also be used by planning officers to assess the adequacy of the proposed type, quantity and quality of GI provision, including the appropriateness of on-site Biodiversity Net Gain proposals.

Consideration will also be given to requiring planning applications for major and strategic development proposals to be supported by a **Green Infrastructure Plan** to demonstrate how the proposal responds to the requirements of the Local Plan's GI Policy, and any relevant adopted supplementary guidance. The Plan would also include details of arrangements for long-term stewardship and monitoring (any BNG habitats will require a 30-year management plan).

Local Planning Authorities and applicants will be required to take into account the **Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy** as a material consideration for planning.

The **Natural England Green Infrastructure Planning & Design Guide** provides guidance for developers on how well-designed GI can integrate with built design to create good quality, distinctive and sustainable places.

We also advocate the use of the **Building with Nature Standards** which identify good practice wildlife, water and wellbeing standards for integrating GI and development. These Standards can be used for designing and assessing major development proposals and strategic development sites.

Setting GI targets and standards

To drive forward the pace, scale and quality of GI required to support sustainable growth in Greater Norwich, we need ambitious and locally achievable targets and standards for nature-based solutions.

Reflecting national legislation, policy and Natural England's GI Standards, we have developed the following provisional local GI targets and standards for consideration that may be appropriate for incorporation into future reviews of relevant plans within Greater Norwich.

Urban Greening Standards

New major residential development will have at least 50% average green cover (including private gardens and green roofs). There is no net loss of green cover across existing urban residential neighbourhoods, and urban greening is at least 40% average green cover in neighbourhoods where they do not already meet that standard.

Major development will achieve Natural England's Urban Greening Factors of at least 0.3 for commercial development and 0.4 for residential development (0.5 for residential greenfield development).

Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standards

Increase tree canopy cover in the Norwich Urban Area, main towns and larger villages to at least 20% from the current baseline of 16.5% (based on the national benchmark target of 20% recommended by the Urban Forestry & Woodland Advisory Committee).

Major development will achieve a minimum future canopy cover of 30% of the site area through retention of existing trees and planting of new trees, including new streets that are tree lined.

Accessible Greenspace Standards

Everyone has access to a range of good quality natural greenspace within 15 minutes' walking distance from their homes by 2038; greenspaces are accessible by public transport or safe active travel routes; and there is at least 2ha of accessible greenspace per 1,000 population with no net loss or reduction in capacity.

Major residential developments will provide accessible greenspace in accordance with the quantity, size and distance criteria, and capacity targets, specified by the local planning authority based on the Accessible Greenspace Standards.

Accessible greenspace will be designed and maintained to be socially inclusive, safe, welcoming and well-managed (in line with the Green Flag Award® criteria and the Sensory Trust's guidance on designing accessible outdoor spaces).

Urban Nature Recovery Standards

Urban areas will have at least 1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1,000 population by 2038, and will be managed sustainably. Existing County Wildlife Sites will be enhanced and new Sites will be identified.

Major development will contribute to local nature recovery strategy objectives through the creation and restoration of nature-rich habitats, including Local Nature Reserves or County Wildlife Sites.

Parks and highways management

GI can be delivered through innovative approaches to the management and maintenance of public land, buildings and grey infrastructure.

Just as other forms of infrastructure need to be regularly upgraded, extended or modified, the functions of parks and green spaces need to be reconsidered to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose in the face of future urban living challenges.

Positive management, upgrading or repurposing of public parks, amenity green space and highway verges has the potential to enhance the value and functionality of existing GI assets. For example, increasing wildflower planting, tree planting and lighter touch maintenance on council owned land to “re-wild” amenity green spaces for the benefit of urban wildlife and pollinators.

Retrofitting new GI into urban environments to address deficiencies in provision (e.g. green roofs/living walls, pocket parks, SuDS, greenways along disused railways. etc) should also be considered as and where opportunities arise.



Eaton Park in Norwich © Paul Rabbitts

Community engagement and stewardship

Sustaining green spaces through effective long-term stewardship and funding is vital to delivering benefits and value for future generations.

We will seek to encourage local community engagement in looking after GI assets through consideration of:

- Appropriate community-led stewardship bodies to support long-term adoption, management and maintenance of green spaces
- Agreements for long-term management/maintenance of GI assets
- Support for local groups and initiatives (community capacity building and effective dialogue)
- Innovative revenue/maintenance funding models for ensuring the long-term legacy and care of GI assets
- Appropriate mechanisms for ensuring the principles of this GI Strategy are upheld by landowners/management organisations through good management and maintenance
- Opportunities to promote and support the benefits of volunteering for people's health and wellbeing, providing a sense of purpose, learning new skills and strengthening communities by connecting people

We will support delivery of community-led GI projects by engaging with parish/town councils, local community groups and disengaged groups to:

- Raise awareness of the GI Strategy
- Demonstrate how the GI Story Map can be used to inform projects
- Showcase case studies of successful “grassroots” GI projects
- Offer advice on sources of relevant funding opportunities (such as the Greater Norwich neighbourhood CIL/Infrastructure Investment Fund)
- Provide signposts to practical guidance - such as [Planning Aid's Community-led Green Space Toolkit](#)

How we will review the strategy

We will monitor and review delivery of the GI Strategy to evaluate progress towards achieving our shared vision

Reviews of the Strategic Delivery Plan will be undertaken and published on an annual basis following the publication of this Strategy, and include a clear summary of outcomes achieved.

We will share learnings from the annual reviews with our partners on a regular basis.

It is expected that a review of the overall approach set out in the GI Strategy would be undertaken every 5 years or so, or earlier if necessary to ensure that it remains relevant and aligned to national legislative/policy drivers and local priorities for GI.

To inform future reviews and monitoring of the Strategy, we will develop a spatial data management protocol for maintaining and enhancing the supporting GI evidence base to ensure it is up-to-date.



Coltishall in the Broad National Park © Broadland District Council

Next steps

- Developing a communications plan to raise awareness of the new GI Strategy
- Developing a pipeline of projects for delivering the proposed Strategic Green Infrastructure Initiatives
- Aligning decisions about allocation of the Infrastructure Investment Fund with the strategic priorities of the Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Exploring opportunities for securing additional external funding
- Monitoring delivery and reporting on progress

Appendix 1 – GNLP GI Policy References

There is extensive coverage of GI in the Greater Norwich Local Plan (adopted March 2024). Both the policies and supporting text make it clear that this updated GI Strategy should be used as part of the Local Plan.

The following extracts from policies and supporting text sets out the main elements of GI coverage in the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) Strategy.

Policy 2 Sustainable Communities (Issue 3)

‘To contribute to the the achievement of sustainable communities, development proposals should, where relevant, address the following matters...Create and contribute to multi-functional green infrastructure links, whether provided on-site or off-site, including through landscaping, street trees and other tree planting, taking account of local green infrastructure strategies and delivery plans.’

Supporting text (table 8) states:

‘Developments are required to provide on-site or off-site green infrastructure appropriate to their scale and location. The three main benefits of green infrastructure: biodiversity gain; the promotion of active travel and the reduction of flood risk, are key NPPF priorities. On-site provision will provide landscaping, street trees and other planting and will link and contribute to the further development of an area-wide green infrastructure network. This network, also promoted through policies 3 and 4, has now been in development in Greater Norwich for over a decade. Development of the green infrastructure network will be in accordance with existing and amended versions of the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy and delivery plans, and other documents such as the River Wensum Strategy.’

Policy 3 Environmental Protection and Enhancement

‘Development proposals should enhance the natural environment through....provision of new, or conservation or enhancement of existing, green infrastructure to contribute (directly or indirectly) to the strategic green infrastructure network having regard to local green infrastructure strategies (identified indicatively in Maps 8A and 8B). In addition, development will deliver net biodiversity gain through the provision of on-site or off-site natural features, creating new or enhancing existing green infrastructure networks that have regard to local green infrastructure strategies. It should be demonstrated that the gain to biodiversity is a significant enhancement (at least a 10% gain) compared to the existing situation.’

Supporting text in para 198 states:

‘The Joint Core Strategy identified the potential to create a new country park at Bawburgh Lakes to the west of Norwich. It would complement the existing country park to the east of the city at Whitlingham, with the parks linked by the Yare Valley green corridor. Its establishment remains desirable. However, the policy is not site-specific as other opportunities may be identified either through local green infrastructure strategies or through other means. For example, there are proposals being brought forward to develop the Broadland Country Park to the north-west of Horsford and new small-scale country parks, such as at Ladybelt Country Park in East Carleton, can provide valuable additional green infrastructure.’

Policy 3 is also supported by text in paras 202 to 205, in particular para 204:

‘An updated Green Infrastructure Strategy is being produced. This should also be used to assist in identifying the most suitable green infrastructure provision to serve specific developments and contribute to the development of the network.’

Policy 4 Strategic Infrastructure

‘In line with other policies in this plan, a multi-functional strategic green infrastructure network will be further developed as set out in maps 8A and B and in green infrastructure strategy updates.’

Policy 6 The Economy

‘Tourism, leisure, environmental and cultural industries will be promoted and assisted by...Protection, enhancement and expansion of the green infrastructure network.’

Supporting text in paragraph 296 states:

‘Implementation of the policy will also see employment development contribute to the green infrastructure network as appropriate’.

Policy 7 - Strategy for the Growth Areas

Policy 7.1 Norwich Urban Area including the fringe parishes

‘Enhancements to the green infrastructure network which will include links to and within the Wensum, Yare, Tud and Tas Valleys, Marriott’s Way and from Mousehold through the North-East Growth Triangle as set out in maps 8A and B and in green infrastructure strategy updates, along with local networks.’

Policy 7.2 The Main Towns

‘Enhancements to the multi-functional green infrastructure network will be provided by development to contribute to the strategic network as set out in maps 8A and B and in green infrastructure strategy updates and to linking local networks.’

Supporting text states:

Aylsham (para 356) - ‘The Bure Valley and the Marriott’s Way form the core of a well-developed local and strategic green infrastructure network and development could support further improvements.’

Diss (para. 362) – ‘Diss and Roydon are in the Waveney Valley. The valley provides an attractive setting for the settlements and is the hub of an extensive green infrastructure network including the Angles and Boudicca Ways’.

Harleston (para. 368) – ‘Harleston is close to the River Waveney and the Angles Way along the valley forms part of the strategic green infrastructure network’.

Policy 7.3 The Key Service Centres

‘Enhancements to the multi-functional green infrastructure network will be provided by development to contribute to the strategic network as set out in maps 8A and B and in green infrastructure strategy updates and to linking local networks.’

Policy 7.4 Village Clusters

‘Enhancements to the multi-functional green infrastructure network provided by development will contribute to the strategic network as set out in maps 8A and B and in green infrastructure strategy updates and to linking local networks.’

Glossary definition of Green Infrastructure

‘A network of multi-functional green space which delivers benefits to both the environment and the local community. Green infrastructure includes natural green spaces colonised by plants and animals and man-made managed green spaces such as areas used for outdoor sport and recreation including public and private open space. These spaces may include allotments, urban parks and designed historic landscapes as well as their many interconnections such as footpaths, cycleways, green corridors, and waterway.’

Appendix 2 – Supporting GI Strategy Evidence Reports

Active Places Evidence

- **GI Baseline Report** (NCoC, 2023) – provides evidence of the types and distribution of current GI provision within Greater Norwich, and assesses who currently has access to GI (**Annex A**)
- **GI Public Survey Summary Report** (NCoC, 2023) – provides evidence of how people value and use greenspace in Greater Norwich, and offers insights into what improvements people would like to see (**Annex B**)
- **GI Evidence & Opportunities Report** (NCoC, 2024) – Section 4.0 identifies opportunities for addressing gaps/deficiencies in access to natural greenspace at different geographical scales across Greater Norwich (**Annex C**)
- **GI Technical Report** (NCoC, 2024) – sets out the methods and data used for the assessments of accessible GI (**Annex D**)

Natural Places Evidence

GI Supplementary Evidence & Opportunities Report (CBA/NCS, 2024) - Annex E:

- Provides baseline evidence of current habitats⁷ within Greater Norwich, and identifies opportunities for creating and restoring new habitats to strengthen the connectivity of existing **habitat networks** in support of nature recovery goals (Section 2.0)

⁷ Section 5.0 of the **GI Evidence & Opportunities Report** (NCoC, 2024) also includes analyses of irreplaceable habitats, landscape connectivity features (linear features) and long continuity habitats that contribute to habitat networks in Greater Norwich

- Identifies opportunities for where new habitats can contribute to wider environmental benefits through the supply of multiple **ecosystem services** (Section 3.0)

This evidence can also be used to inform the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy currently being developed by the Norfolk & Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership.

Mapping Multi-Functional GI Opportunities

Section 4.0 of the **GI Supplementary Evidence & Opportunities Report** (CBA/NCS, 2024) brings together and integrates the findings of the Active Places and Natural Places evidence to identify opportunity areas with the greatest potential for multi-functional GI within Greater Norwich.

Stakeholder Engagement

The stakeholder engagement workshop reports provide details of feedback from the 35 public, private and third sector organisations in Greater Norwich who participated in two workshops (**Annex F and G**).

GI Area Profiles

Drawing on the above evidence and stakeholder feedback, spatial priorities and opportunities for enhancing and expanding the Strategic GI Network are identified for different parts of Greater Norwich in the GI Area Profiles document (**Annex H**).

This analysis also reflects other evidence including local landscape character assessments and relevant Strategic Environmental Opportunities identified by the Natural England National Character Areas within Greater Norwich as highlighted in the document.

Appendix 3 – GI Strategy Links

Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy

Norfolk/sub-regional links	Greater Norwich links	District Councils/Broads Authority links
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (forthcoming) • Norfolk Green Infrastructure & Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Norwich Local Plan 2018-2038 (adopted 2024) • Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan (2024) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norwich Environmental Strategy 2020-25 • Norwich Climate Action Plan (2024) • Norwich Biodiversity Strategy 2022-32 & Baseline Study (2024) • Norwich Parks & Green Spaces Strategy (draft 2024) • Norwich Development Management Plan (adopted 2014) • Norwich Health & Wellbeing Partnership Strategic Plan 2023-25
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norfolk Access Improvement Plan 2019–29 • Norfolk Walking, Wheeling & Cycling Strategy (2024) • Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care and Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy (2024) • Norfolk County Council Public Health Strategic Plan (2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Norwich Physical Activity & Sport Strategy 2022-27 • Greater Norwich Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (2021) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Norfolk Environmental Strategy 2023-25 • South Norfolk Biodiversity Baseline Study (forthcoming) • South Norfolk Development Management Plan (adopted 2015) • South Norfolk Health & Wellbeing Partnership Strategy (2023)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norfolk County Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (2021) • Broadland Catchment Partnership Plan (2014) • Environment Agency Anglian River Basin Management Plan (2014) 	<i>This cell left intentionally blank</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadland Environmental Strategy 2022-24 • Broadland Biodiversity Baseline Study (forthcoming) • Broadland Development Management Plan (adopted 2015) • Broadland Health & Wellbeing Partnership Strategy (2023)
<i>This cell left intentionally blank</i>	<i>This cell left intentionally blank</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broads Management Plan 2022-27 • Broads Biodiversity & Water Strategy 2019-24 • Integrated Access Strategy for the Broads (2024) • Broads Local Plan 2015-2036 (adopted 2019)

The Green Infrastructure Strategy was prepared by a consultant team led by CBA in collaboration with the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Programme Team/Delivery Group:

- Active Norfolk
- Broads Authority
- Greater Norwich Project Team
- Norfolk County Council
- Norwich City Council
- Public Health Norfolk
- South Norfolk and Broadland Councils

The Strategy was produced in partnership with the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Steering Group:

- Active Norfolk
- Broads Authority
- Natural England
- NHS Norfolk & Waveney Integrated Care Board
- Norfolk County Council (Chair)
- Norfolk Wildlife Trust
- Norwich City Council
- Public Health Norfolk
- South Norfolk and Broadland Councils
- University of East Anglia



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