

**Norwich Over the Wensum
Neighbourhood Plan
2024-38**

**V2.8 Regulation 14 Consultation Version
March 2026**

Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Plan

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to help ensure that future development meets the aspirations and needs of residents, businesses, those who work in the area and those who visit for shopping or leisure or other reasons, because they are all part of the living character and energy of the area.

This area of the City Centre has a distinct character and identity, based on 12 centuries of development. There are 125 listed buildings and the entire area is a designated Conservation Area. The area is complex, with intermingled residential, commercial, leisure, art and educational activities, and even includes some light industry. This uniqueness and complexity was acknowledged by the creation of the NCCAAP. The presence of several large brownfield sites in the area means that there will be ongoing development over the years to come. The founders and members of the Neighbourhood Forum, by developing a Neighbourhood Plan, hope to shape development that will build on the history, character and identity and enhance the environment for everyone living, working and spending time in the area.

Extensive engagement with the local community found major themes: the importance of green spaces for recreation and wellbeing; promotion and protection of our heritage and history by sensitivity of design and celebrating local characteristics; importance of quality design and design on a human scale; maintaining the mixed use character of the area (residential, small independent shops, leisure activities, creative arts, etc.); the importance of providing social housing; supporting the creative sector; providing good pedestrian and cycle access; sustainability; river access, and building on brownfield sites.

We have used the outcomes of community and stakeholder engagement and evidence to create this plan.

The Neighbourhood Area covers much of the area to which the Norwich City Council Northern City Centre Area Action Plan relates (NCCAAP, 2010-2017).

1.2 Status of the Plan

The Norwich over the Wensum Neighbourhood Plan, once made, forms part of the statutory development plan, together with the adopted Local Plan. Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications must be determined in accordance with the policies of the statutory development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. So, the Neighbourhood Plan carries real weight in planning decision making.

The Neighbourhood Plan does not deal with excluded matters including waste, mineral extraction or nationally significant infrastructure.

The Neighbourhood Plan will be in force from the date it is made until the end of 2035.

1.3 Implementation, Monitoring and Review

Once made, the Neighbourhood Plan policies will be used by the Norwich City Council to make decisions on planning applications. It will also be used in the appeal process.

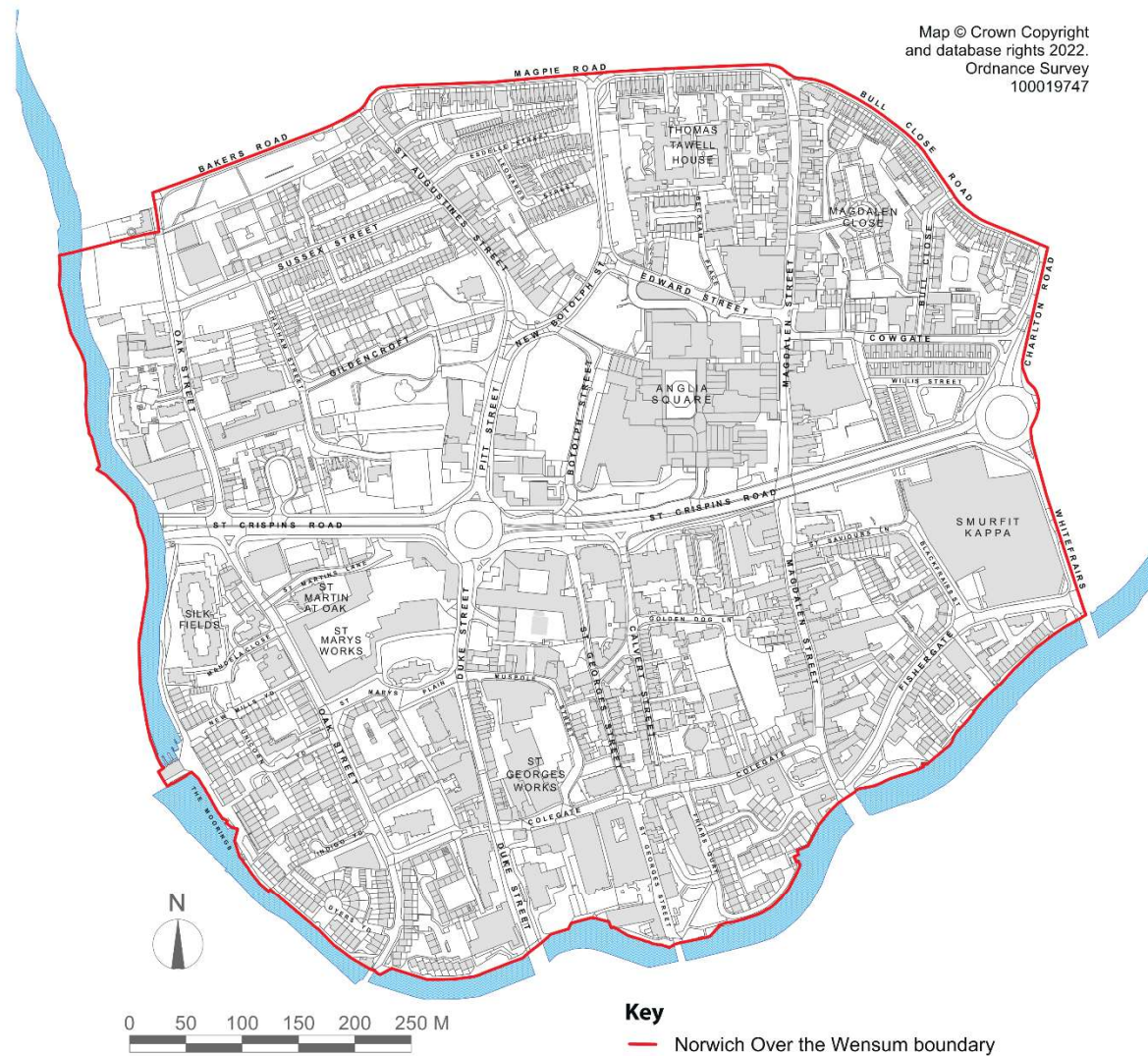
The Neighbourhood Forum or other local organisations and people may refer to Neighbourhood Plan policies in any written representations on planning applications and appeals.

The use of the plan will be monitored by the Neighbourhood Forum or other local bodies, together with changes to national or local policy or to the local area and economy. This will include monitoring of officer reports and decision notices, to assess how the policies are being used, against the context of Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

If and when review and revision become necessary, designation of a new Neighbourhood Forum would be necessary.

Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Plan

Map 1: Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Area



2. Norwich Over the Wensum - Background

2.1 The Neighbourhood Area

Overview

The Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Area sits in a fold of the River Wensum as it passes through Norwich. The river separates the area from the retail core and central business district of Norwich City Centre, with several crossing points.

The area is notable for the concentration of a wide variety of independent, specialist and ethnic shops and restaurants, in addition to second hand and charity shops. It is part of the Norwich Creative Quarter.

The area includes a complex mix of land uses, including employment, education, residential, retail, hospitality and a range of community facilities.

Demographic background

OCSI (Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion); *Local Insight England Summary Report Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum (NOWNF)* June 2024 indicates the following:

Population

- 3,052 people, not significantly changed from 2011.
- Residences: 1900 (Norwich City Council Street list 2011) plus new 684 bedroom student block.
- Population density high: 4953/km²: over 1000 more per km² than Norwich as a whole. The population (and thus population density) are likely to increase significantly as brownfield sites are developed.
- Population under 16 years of age: low 9 % (Norwich 16%). However the presence of a 1,000 pupil secondary school, a nearby 200 pupil primary school, a preschool, toddler groups and children's activities, mean that such young people are still an important factor.
- Working age population (16 – 64 years): high 74% (Norwich 69%, England 63%).
- Elderly population: 16.5% (Norwich 15%).

Deprivation

The Norwich Over the Wensum Area has high levels of deprivation:

- Index of Multiple Deprivation high: Norwich Over the Wensum (NOW) 39%, Norwich 28%, England 22%.

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- Percent in lowest decile of the Multiple Deprivation Index very high: NOW 50%; Norwich 20%; England 10%
- Working age benefit claimants: NOW 6.2%; Norwich 4.0%; England 3.9%. Stable post the pandemic blip, and the same as prior to the pandemic on data available.
- Disabled (as defined by the Equality Act): NOW 29%; Norwich 21%
- Personal Independence Payments (PIP) claimants: NOW 15%; Norwich 9%
- the Index of Deprivation (IoD) Air Quality measure: IoD 2019 Air quality indicator (2016): NOW 1.050 ; Norwich 0.976; England 0.957
- Housing: low levels of owner occupancy and high levels of social and private rent:
 - Owner Occupied: NOW 25%; Norwich 43%; England 62%
 - Rental: Local Authority 24%; Housing association 16%; Private rental 33%

The Local Authority rental is similar to Norwich as a whole, the Housing Association and private rental rates are around 8% higher than Norwich as a whole.

Consumer Data Research Centre (CDRC) information (shows it is predominantly the northern part of the area that is in the lowest (1st) decile with the southern part overall in the 4th decile. This 4th decile hides the fact that there are still areas of deprivation in this southern part, but these are balanced in part by the modern riverside townhouse developments.

Economy

OCSI: *Local Insight England Summary Report NOWNF* June 2024 shows that:

The area has a very high density of jobs, being a mixed-use area. The number of jobs per 100 working-age people was 307% in 2022 compared with Norwich (88%) and England (78%) (number of jobs in the area per 100 working age residents). Clearly many people come in to the area to work. At a rough estimate there are around 500 businesses in the area. The majority of people (92%) work in the private sector, but a high percentage are part time (40%). Job opportunities include:

- Retail; Leisure; Office (particularly shared office spaces)
- Commercial and light industry (cardboard, plastics, motor and motorbike sales)
- Education: in particular University, High school, and two centres for teenagers and young adults pupils not coping with standard education, focusing on practical skills and the arts.
- Creative: numerous artists' studios. This includes many within one of the buildings within the Anglia Square development area that therefore may be demolished. Alternative provision should be carefully considered.

2.2 Community Engagement

What Was Done

Newsletters: All newsletter/flyers were hand delivered to all households and to the majority of shops/businesses within the area.

- July 2021: newsletter to all households inviting them to join in forming the Forum
- March 2022: newsletter to all households including invitation to a drop in event at the church hall where they could comment on what they like/don't like/want to change about the area.
- As an alternative to attendance they could fill in an on-line survey, or printed card to return.
- March 2022 Forum Website created.
- December 2023: flyer advertising drop in event on 13th January 2024
- January/February 2024: newsletter to all updating residents on plan progress and inviting them to two further drop in events

Stakeholder letters: were sent to all stakeholder organisations, giving the aims and themes of the developing plan and inviting feedback.

Posters: were distributed around the area notifying people about the Forum. Further posters were distributed widely advertising the events.

Open events to give information and gain feedback:

- October 2021 – information event pre-formation of Forum; St Mary's Works
- Saturday 26th March 2022 – drop in event with information about neighbourhood planning and asking people to write down what they like/don't like/want to change about the area; 11am to 1.30pm St Augustine's church hall
- October 3rd 2023 – for Forum Members: drop in question session, followed by presentation by Dave Chetwyn of Urban Vision; 5pm to 8pm The Stage, St Augustine's Street
- Three open events were held in St Augustine's Church Hall to present the Aims and Themes of the developing plan for discussion and feedback (Saturday 13th January 2024 – drop in 11 am – 2pm; Saturday 10th February 2024 – drop in 11 am – 2pm, Thursday 22nd February 2024 – drop in 10am – 1pm)
- Presentation and discussion with residents of Doughty's Hospital (elderly accommodation) 11am Wednesday 31st July 2024

Media Coverage: Interview with NOWNF Chair regarding the purpose and work of the Forum – BBC Radio Norfolk, lunchtime programme 24th January 2024

Joining at other events as stallholders

- Rights of the River Wensum Event, end April 2022, Wensum Park
- St George Colegate Eco church events 2022
- St Augustine's Jubilee Street Party, 11am to 3pm Friday 3rd June 2022, St Augustine's Church Hall
- St Augustine's Church Family Fayre, 2-5pm Monday 8th May 2023, St Augustine's Church Hall
- St Augustine's Street Festive Shopping Event (organised by local traders and artists) 5-8 pm Dec 14th 2023.
- SAVE at 50! Building in Context: Delivering Good Growth in Heritage Locations, King's Centre Norwich, 9.30am to 5pm 15th May 2025
- St Augustine's Street Festive Shopping Event 4-8pm December 6th 2025

Community Cafés and Walkabouts

- Ongoing Community Café events: open invitation to members, supporters and mailing list to join members of the Admin Committee for discussion at local cafés on given Saturday mornings, or early morning of a weekday.
- Walkabouts: 3 Area walkabouts were held during August 2022 – these guided group walks providing opportunity to discuss planning issues and opportunities within the area.

Liaison with local businesses: was undertaken both by including the local businesses in the newsletter, poster and card distributions. Also, by undertaking walkabouts within the area - visiting and talking to business owners and shopworkers about their interests and concerns.

What the Community Said

The plan development process has been guided throughout by what we have been told by the community: beginning with the development of the aims, and continuing through the writing of the policies.

The needs and aspirations of the Community were expressed to volunteers from the Forum at our own events and those of other community groups and through on-line surveys and reply cards. A special effort was made by visiting the small businesses in the area to ensure that their views were included. We were also able to incorporate some community information from earlier initiatives looking into planning in the neighbourhood.

There was a strong feeling among the people of the area that the long history and distinct built and cultural character of the area mean it is a distinct entity, different from the city centre south of the river. People wish to preserve this history and identity. The lists below summarise the key issues raised frequently by contributors.

- The importance of Heritage assets of what is a very historic area of Norwich, and that development should respect and enhance them.
- Support was given for regeneration of brownfield sites, provided it responds to the needs of the local community, including maintaining the mixed-use character.
- Buildings should be built to last, structurally and functionally.
- Building heights should be in keeping with the majority of buildings in the area.
- Affordability was a theme of many responses. There was much concern that development would price out the people who live and work in the area, adversely impacting lower income groups and local people. Social housing need was emphasized.
- Continued provision for creative arts and artists and small independent shops.
- Improvement of community facilities such as places to sit, and public toilets.
- Green spaces, large and small are cherished by many and should be preserved and enhanced and where spaces could be identified further recreational spaces would be welcomed.
- The River Wensum is a highly valued asset which many wish to see made more use of without detracting from its character and its aquatic wildlife habitats.
- Accessibility and travel are important: particularly for pedestrians, cycling and public transport: improve connectivity and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

Not all of the comments can be fully realised in planning, but the aims of this plan are to respect and support the desires of the local community.

3. Aims and Strategy

3.1 Planning Aims

Analysis of the Neighbourhood Area and outcomes from community engagement have helped to identify the following key planning aims.

- i. **To support high quality and sustainable regeneration, including development of brownfield sites and realising the potential of the area's heritage.**
- ii. **Maintaining a mixed neighbourhood to meet the housing, employment, recreational, educational, shopping and other diverse needs of the local community.**
- iii. **To promote sustainable and active travel, enabling walking and cycling.**
- iv. **To promote high quality, sustainable design, reinforcing local distinctiveness and historic character.**
- v. **To ensure that development helps to address climate change and responds to the effects of climate change.**
- vi. **To protect or enhance green spaces.**
- vii. **To enhance the environment and accessibility of the river Wensum.**

3.2 Sustainable Development Strategy

The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan are underpinned by evidence and have been drafted to meet the needs and visions of local people. Norwich Over the Wensum is a mixed hinterland to the City Centre, including a mix of residential, commercial, cultural and other uses. It has a wide demographic profile, including many residents with lower incomes. The policies are sensitive to the diverse population.

The Plan positively supports regeneration, including heritage-led regeneration and development of brownfield sites. Development of Anglia Square presents a key opportunity, but only if developed in a way that is sensitive to the surrounding area and community. Climate change is addressed in various ways, including support for mixed use and maintaining a walkable neighbourhood. Design is a key issue for the Plan. The Plan deals with environmental protection, including the historic environment, river and green and blue infrastructure.

3.3 Format of Policies

The following chapters contain policies, which are based on analysis of key issues, relevant evidence, the outcomes of community and stakeholder engagement and national and local planning policies.

The structure of the following policies is as follows:

Purpose (what the policies in the chapter seek to achieve)

Planning Rationale (concise summary of the thinking behind the policies)

Then for each individual policy:

The policy (requirements for development proposals to meet)

Interpretation (notes on how the policy should be applied)

4. Regeneration - Living and Working

Purpose

The policies in this Chapter support and enable high quality and sustainable development and regeneration of the Neighbourhood Area, including development of brownfield sites and sensitive reuse of the area's heritage. The policies seek to maintain or enhance a mixed-use neighbourhood to meet the housing, employment, recreational, educational, shopping and other diverse needs of the local community.

Policy Context

Chapter 5 of the National Planning Policy Framework December 2023 (NPPF) deals with supply of homes, mix and affordability. Chapter 6 of the NPPF deals with building a strong, competitive economy and the need to create conditions for businesses to invest, expand and adapt. Chapter 7 refers to the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities. Chapter 8 deals with promoting healthy and safe communities. Planning policies should aim to achieve 'healthy, inclusive and safe places ...'. This includes promoting social interaction, being safe and accessible, and enable and support healthy lifestyles. Policies should also make provision for shared spaces and community facilities and guard against loss of valued facilities and services.

The Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP, adopted March 2024) has six sites allocated for development within the area and gives detailed planning guidance for each with a focus on mixed use development. This includes the 4.79-hectare Strategic Site of Anglia Square. Please see Map 2B - GNLP Showing Site Allocations.

Norwich City Council provided a Housing Needs Assessment (2025) which demonstrates that the indicative housing requirement figure for the neighbourhood area is 604 homes for the period of 2018 to 2038. This is more than adequately covered by homes allocated in the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP 2024 to 2038), or with extant planning permission within the neighbourhood area totalling 1,912.

Table 1: Norwich City Council Housing Needs Assessment (to 2025)

	No. Dwellings	Notes
GNLP allocated sites in NOW area	285	NCC.19 NCC.17 NCC.16

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Sites with extant planning permission in NOW area	1,230	These sites are all on brownfield land STR.02/ 22/00434/F NCC.15 / 18/01552/F NCC.20 / 22/00762/F 18/00004/F	
Brownfield land register sites in NOW area	40	These are additional sites identified in the latest brownfield register. Site capacity is estimated	
Windfall delivery in NOW area 2015/16 – 2024/25 (net)	357	21/01054/F 22/00048/MA 19/00257/F 16/00485/F 18/01524/F 16/00699/F 16/00206/U 18/00185/F 19/00408/U 19/00304/U 16/01803/F	16/00779/F 12/00305/ET 05/00745/F 13/02047/F 12/00305/ET 15/01214/F 07/01281/F 15/01449/F 13/00863/F 12/00695/F
	1,912		

Policies in the GNLP include:

Policy 1: The Sustainable Growth Strategy (which specifies a hierarchy, with Norwich as the main focus for growth).

Policy 2: Sustainable Communities (dealing with infrastructure, design and other matters in general terms).

Policy 3: Environmental Protection and Enhancement (dealing with the historic and natural environments, mainly reflecting national policy and guidance).

Policy 4: Strategic Infrastructure (dealing with transport, but with less emphasis on active travel in urban areas).

Policy 5: Homes (including affordable housing thresholds and proportions)

Policy 6: The Economy Including Retail (including employment and tourism)

Policy 7: Strategy for Areas of Growth (Paragraphs 319-326 deal specifically with the norther City Centre).

Policies in the Greater Norwich Local Plan are strategic and fairly generic, so the Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to apply them in a locally specific way.

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The Norwich development management policies local plan (adopted December 2014) includes the following policies, of particular relevance to regeneration, living and working and the large district centre:

- Policy DM1 Achieving and delivering sustainable development
- Policy DM2 Amenity
- Policy DM9 The historic environment and heritage assets
- Policy DM12 Principles for all residential development
- Policy DM16 Employment and business development
- Policy DM17 Protection of small and medium scale business sites and premises
- Policy DM18 Retail, leisure and other main town centre uses
- Policy DM19 Offices
- Policy DM20 Managing change in the primary and secondary retail areas and Large District Centres
- Policy DM22 Provision and enhancement of community facilities
- Policy DM23 Evening, leisure and late-night uses
- Policy DM29 City centre public off-street car-parking
- Policy DM32 Car Free or Low Car Housing

Planning Rationale

Mixed Use

The Neighbourhood Plan needs to ensure that future development meets the needs and aspirations of local people, promoting diversity of use and for all those who live, work, shop or spend leisure time in the area.

The Norwich Over the Wensum area has evolved its own distinctive character historically and geographically, being separated from the (contemporary) main city centre by the river Wensum. This is a mixed-use area comprising residential, offices, retail, education, artistic, leisure and community uses and light industry and commercial employment.

The numerous offices include single businesses and shared office blocks. Educational facilities include a university, high school, pre-school and two establishments for pupils not settling in school or college, one focusing on creative arts. The area comprises a large part of the Norwich Creative Quarter and there is a strong creative element, with arts, crafts and music studios and teaching.

It is desirable to maintain the mix of uses, including local employment.

Large District Centre

The area includes a Large District Centre serving predominantly a lower income hinterland. Development within and around a Large District Centre provides an

opportunity to enhance the viability and vitality of the centre for the population it serves.

The retail offer predominantly comprises small independent outlets. Grocery and other outlets reflect a wide ethnic diversity. Many of the smaller business and charity shops have a sustainable 'bargain' ethos offering second hand and antique goods. Traditional pubs exist alongside a variety of cafes and restaurants and cater for all tastes and pockets.

High streets priorities for town centre recovery (High Street Task Force) relevant to planning policy include improving image and visual appearance, non-retail and leisure offer, walkability, public spaces, mixed use, and regeneration. The following policies in this plan seeks to address these issues.

There are two venues capable of hosting local and national theatre productions and events, and also smaller more affordable spaces for hire. There are diverse activities for families and young people from standard (dance school, pool club) to unusual (circus school, virtual reality escape room).

Regeneration

This is a densely built urban area. Having regard to national policy, opportunities for regeneration and development rely primarily on:

- Development of site allocations in the Greater Norwich Local Plan, including Anglia Square (one of the GNLP's three 'Strategic Sites');
- Development of brownfield sites;
- Redevelopment or remodelling of buildings identified as having negative impact on the character or appearance and special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Appraisal is due to be updated and future development should take note of the identified buildings in the new appraisal when it is available.
- Potential development opportunities for surface car parks, reflecting a transition from car use to active travel and sustainable transport.
- The area under the west side of the St Crispin's Road flyover. Norfolk County Council would need to be able to access the underside of the flyover in case of need for repair.

The historic environment provides an important context and opportunity for growth. The entire area is within the Norwich City Centre Conservation Area and many buildings are listed. Some buildings have changed to new uses, including creative repurposing of Medieval churches and changes of use of Victorian factories for offices, flats, and a school. Such buildings are conserved but also continue as part of the living fabric of the community.

Housing

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The area has a mix of social housing and privately owned properties, of varying age and design serving a range of needs. There are townhouses, purpose and non-purpose-built flats, student specific blocks and over 55's and sheltered accommodation, including some specifically for the visually impaired. There is considerable economic variation with approximately half the area being within the lowest 10% most deprived areas.

Housing development should inform the diverse needs of the community. To support existing and future housing, it is important to maintain or widen the range of community facilities in the area.

The Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to amend Local Plan policy on affordable housing thresholds or proportions, but does seek to ensure that such provision is provided as an integral part of development.

Nutrient Neutrality

Nutrient Neutrality considerations may prevent or delay the granting of planning permission and discussions with the Norwich City Councils are advised, at an early stage of the planning process.

NOW1: Regeneration

1. In addition to sites allocated in the Local Plan, the development of brown field sites will be supported, to provide commercial and workspace (Use Class E), live/work units, residential accommodation, creative and cultural uses, educational facilities, community facilities or other uses that are appropriate to the site and context and would complement the existing mix of uses in the area, subject to:
 - a. there being no conflict with existing adjoining or nearby uses; and
 - b. there being no significant adverse impact on the amenities of nearby residential properties.
2. The remodelling or demolition and redevelopment of existing unlisted buildings will be supported where the existing building has a negative impact on the special architectural or historic interest or character or appearance or of the Norwich City Centre Conservation Area, subject to:
 - a. the proposed scheme being designed to a high standard, to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Norwich City Centre Conservation Area;
 - b. there being no significant adverse impact on the amenities of nearby residential properties.
3. The development of surface carparks for other purposes set out in Clause 1 of this policy will be supported, subject to:
 - a. evidence indicating that such parking provision is no longer required; or
 - b. if parking provision is still required, the redevelopment includes a similar number of vehicle parking spaces within or adjacent to the scheme; and
 - c. there being no significant adverse impact on the amenities of nearby residential properties.
4. Existing manufacturing and industrial uses (Use Classes E and B2) should be retained, where possible, as part of the mix of employment in the area.
5. Development in the Large District Centre (as defined in the Local Plan) will be supported, including reuse of upper floors, subject to:
 - a. maintaining or enhancing and not harming its vitality and viability as a district centre and focus for retail, employment and community facilities;
 - b. providing retail, commercial or other town centre uses for ground floor street frontages units, where possible;
 - c. there being no significant adverse impact on the amenities of nearby residential properties.

- 6. Development of the space under the St Crispin's Road Flyover to provide market stalls, recreational or cultural spaces, active travel facilities or other activities to complement the Large District Centre will be supported, subject to:**
 - a. safe access and servicing being provided;**
 - b. any structures being temporary and removable to allow access for highway maintenance works, if required.**
- 7. The reuse and creative adaptation and improvement of historic buildings will be supported, including works to improve energy efficiency, subject to the scheme being sensitively designed and preserving or enhancing:**
 - a. the special architectural or historic interest and setting of listed buildings; and/or**
 - b. for unlisted buildings, preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area.**

Interpretation

The policy has been drafted to augment existing Local Plan use policies, applying key principles to the specific Neighbourhood Area and Conservation Area. In particular, the policy augments and should be applied together with Policies DM1, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM19, DM21 and DM22 of the Local Plan.

Certain changes of use would not require planning permission, due to permitted development rights.

In applying clause 2 of the policy, the Norwich City Centre Conservation Area appraisal identifies 'negative' buildings. At the time of writing, Norwich City Council proposes to update this document. For clarity, the policy would not support the demolition or remodelling of a building due to poor maintenance or repair, if the building contributed to the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area.

Uses that could add to the vitality and viability of the Large District Centre could include retail, food and drink, other hospitality uses, leisure, recreation, performance, arts and culture, community facilities, markets, gaming, personal and health services and other typical town centre uses. Adverse impacts on vitality or viability could include development involving the loss of employment space or community facilities.

The policy seeks to enable development of brownfield sites or redevelopment of buildings that have a negative impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. This provides economic opportunity and also potential positive outcomes for the Conservation Area. Reuse and adaptation of historic buildings is also supported. The policy also focuses on the vitality of the Large District Centre.

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In the application of the policy, design and infrastructure requirements and impacts on the historic and green environments are addressed in Policies NOW3, NOW4, NOW5 and NOW6. These would apply to all schemes, including those to remodel or redevelop 'negative' buildings.

Anglia Square is the main redevelopment opportunity within the Neighbourhood Area and the Large District Centre. A scheme of exceptional quality would be expected, meeting the requirements of later policies within this Neighbourhood Plan.

Engagement with Norfolk County Council (the local highway authority) is clearly a requirement for development involving the space under the flyover or surface car parks.

The clause on creative adaptation of historic buildings relates both to listed buildings and unlisted buildings in the Conservation Area. Internal retrofitting works to improve energy performance would usually not require consent for unlisted buildings, but may require listed building consent for listed buildings.

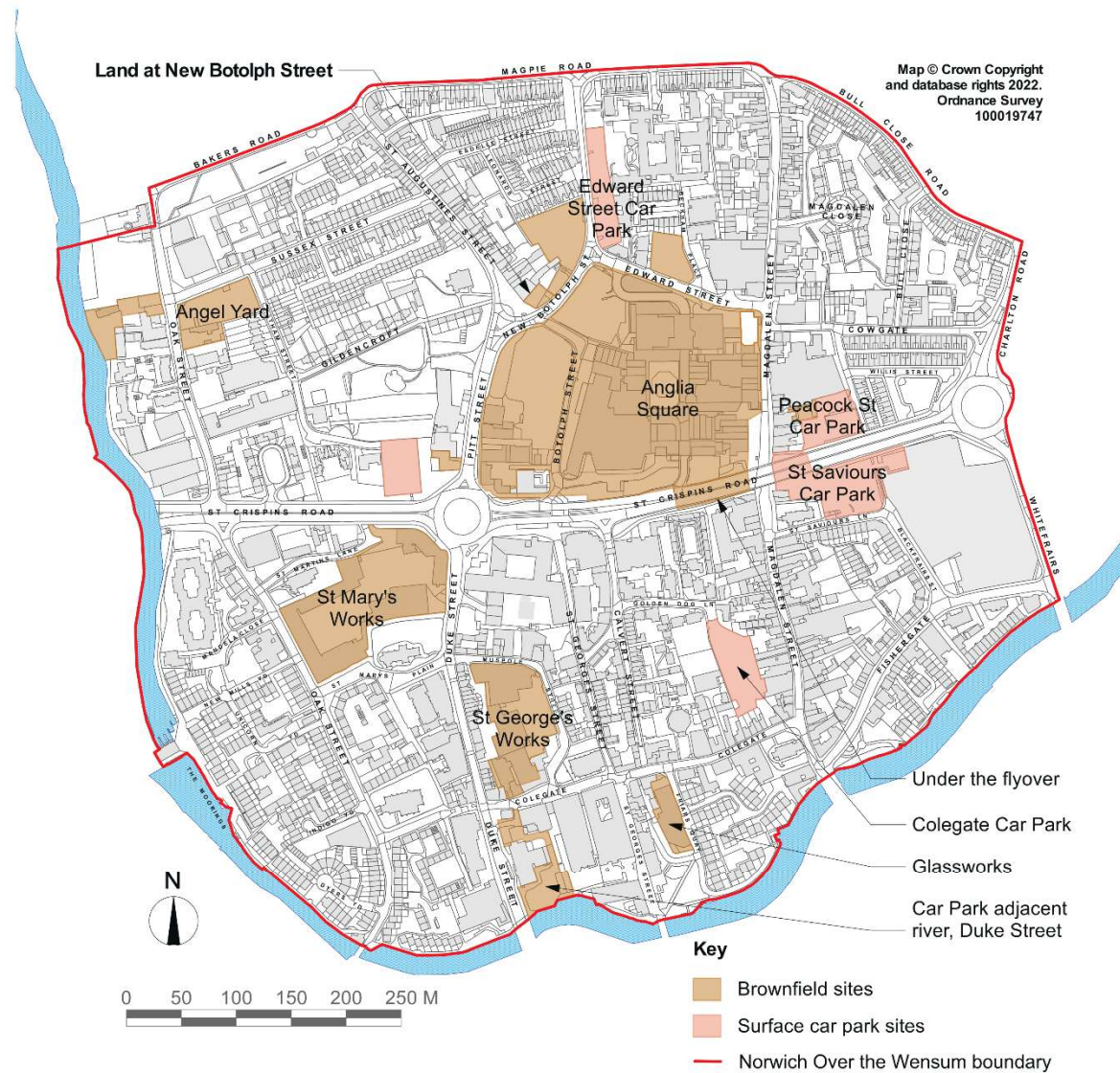
The policy would support development of live/work units.

Impacts on residential amenity could include noise, vibration, disturbance (including from additional traffic movements), fumes, overlooking, loss of light and other impacts set out in Local Plan Policy DM2.

Archaeology is dealt with by Local Plan and will need to be considered in the application of NOW1.

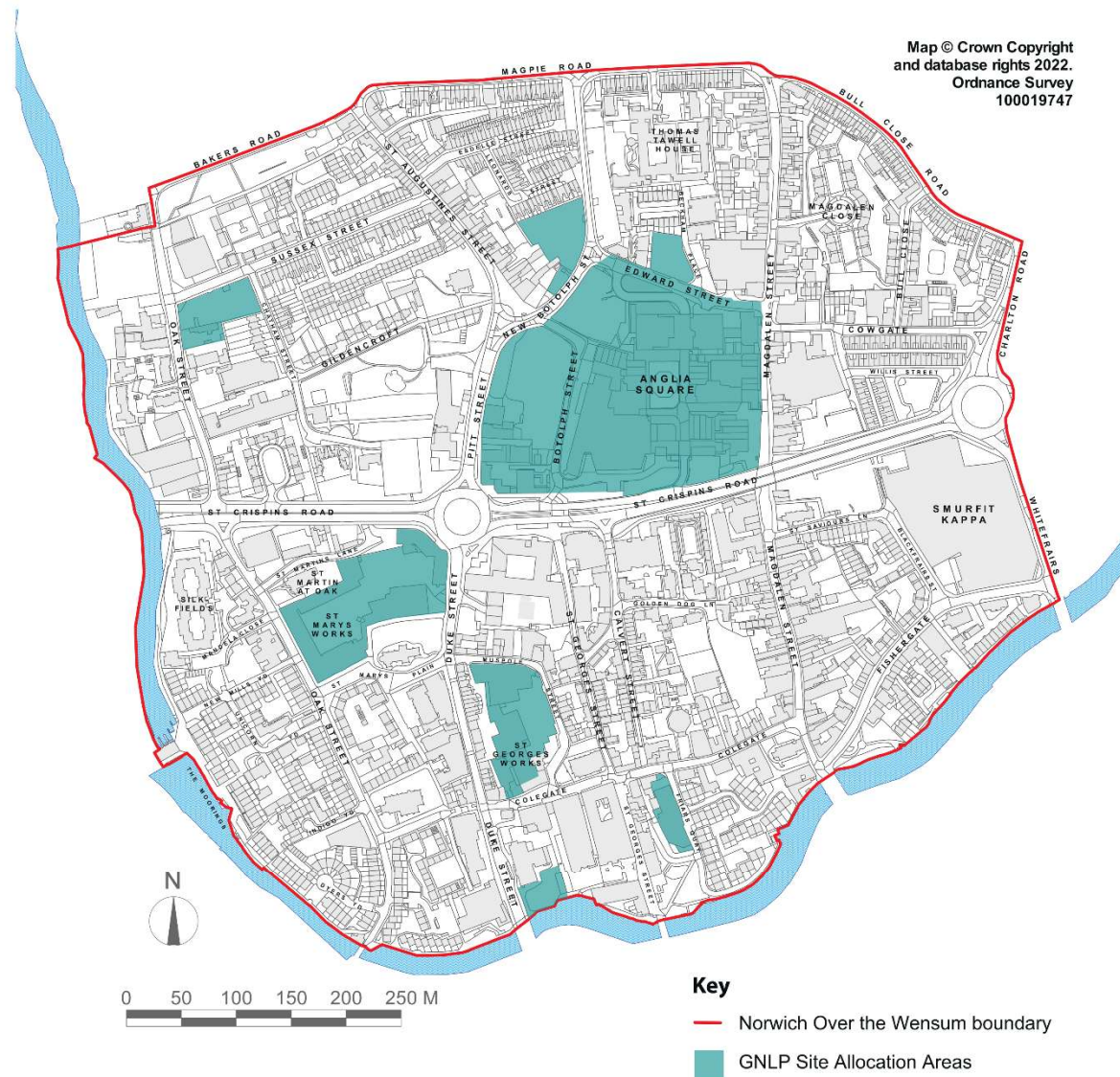
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Map 2 - Brownfield and Car Park Sites



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Map 2B - GNLP Showing Site Allocations



NOW2: Residential Development

- 1. Residential development should include a mix of accommodation, based on the latest available evidence of need, to meet the diverse and changing needs of the Neighbourhood Area's population, including older people or people with limited mobility or impaired vision or other disability.**
- 2. Any affordable housing provision should be designed as an integral part of the scheme, to a similar specification as market housing, so that it is tenure blind.**

Interpretation

The policy recognises the area's diverse population, with diverse housing needs. The latest evidence of need could include evidence underpinning the Local Plan, census data, and other housing needs data.

Design and other requirements for residential development are addressed in policies NOW3, NOW4, NOW5 and NOW6.

Residential accommodation to meet the needs of older people or people with limited mobility could include sheltered housing.

Designing housing to meet changing needs, including home working, could include provision generous storage space, an additional ground floor room, flexible bedrooms and a toilet on each floor.

5. Design and Environment

Purpose

The policies in this Chapter seek to ensure that development is well designed and sustainable, reinforcing local distinctiveness and historic character. Policies also seek to protect or enhance green spaces and to enhance the environment and accessibility of the river Wensum.

Policy Context

Chapter 12 of the NPPF deals with achieving well-designed places. Design considerations include function, adding to the quality of the area, visual attractiveness, effective landscaping, being sympathetic to local character and history, not discouraging innovation and change, maintain strong and distinctive sense of place, optimise site potential, and making safe, inclusive and accessible places. Chapter 16 deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. This includes consideration of sustaining or enhancing heritage assets, wider social, economic and cultural benefits, contribution of new development, and character of place. It also enshrines a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The National Design Guide (2021) establishes that well-designed places have ten characteristics. These are context, nature, identity, use, resources, movement, built form, public space, homes and buildings and lifespan.

The Greater Norwich Local Plan (adopted 2024) includes the following policies:

Policy 2: Sustainable Communities (dealing with infrastructure, design and other matters in general terms).

Policy 3: Environmental Protection and Enhancement (dealing with the historic and natural environments, mainly reflecting national policy and guidance).

Design and environment policies in the Greater Norwich Local Plan are fairly generic, so the Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to apply them in a locally specific way, especially against the context of the area being a designated Conservation Area, with concentrations of listed buildings.

The Norwich development management policies local plan (adopted December 2014) includes the following policies of particular relevance to design and environment:

Policy DM1 Achieving and delivering sustainable development

Policy DM3 Design principles

Policy DM6 Protecting and enhancing the natural environment

Policy DM7 Trees and development

Policy DM8 Open space
Policy DM9 The historic environment and heritage assets
Policy DM28 Encouraging sustainable travel

Planning Rationale

Heritage and Character

The Neighbourhood Area in its entirety is within a designated Conservation Area (Map 3). There are numerous listed buildings in the area, including Medieval flint churches, houses and remnants of the city wall, Georgian chapels and houses and Victorian factories and housing.

The road pattern still follows centuries old patterns apart from the addition of the inner ring road and removal of Botolph Street in the 1970s, and there are both old and new versions of the classic Norwich “yard” structure of groups of houses. A long history leads to a diverse streetscape. There are terraces showing conformity of design, either fronting the street or, classic to the area, set back behind a small frontal space (e.g. Sussex St, Magpie Road). There are streets of historic buildings which blend, but each have individual character (e.g. Magdalen St). There are, of necessity, streets of very disparate heritage and design, but with careful design these can still look good together (e.g. St George’s St). The heritage also shows in the historic shop fronts lining the commercial streets (e.g. St Augustines St). The designs and structure of the streets and yards, conforming, blending but individual, and disparate, create a warmth and a sense of history, and epitomise the character of the area.

Historic building materials include, but not limited to, flint, red brick, timber-frame construction, stone, timber, render, plaster, glass, cast iron, metal panels and details, slate and clay tiles. This variety lends character to the area, but some areas have their own character of design and material (e.g. brick terraces).

The view lines highlight the beauty of the city and its major structures, in and around the area, including churches and the Anglican cathedral and castle.

Development should respond to the long history of the area, visible in the road patterns, townscape and spatial quality, architectural quality and diversity, materials, views, landscape and other aspects of historic character.

Negative features also need to be noted and addressed. Many terraced houses now have large unsightly bins in front and commercial waste bins are on view. New development needs to provide planned places for bins and recycling.

The refurbishment and reuse of historic buildings is a particularly sustainable form of regeneration, avoiding the loss of embodied energy, additional carbon use and landfill associated with demolition and new development.

Sustainable Design

An equal necessity is to build for the long term in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner, with design that will stand the test of time for utility as well as visual impact.

The gradual dereliction and decay of the Anglia square complex over decades exemplifies the need for development of buildings designed structural longevity and for long-term/flexible use, with high quality and durable materials and the creation of a lasting high quality public realm. Sovereign House was innovative and exciting when it was built, but it failed not only on structural sustainability but also on use as it was only occupied for 20 of its nearly 50 years existence.

The climate crisis requires us to consider the carbon footprint of any development. Demolition and rebuilding is carbon intensive; using local and recycled materials can help. A building built for a long-term future with durable material and design saves future carbon expenditure. Building to high environmental standards limits the carbon footprint of the building whilst in use.

The need to consider the historic character of the area and the need to build greener development are not in conflict. The character of the area is diverse and high-quality, creative and environmentally conscious design would be an entirely appropriate response to the Conservation Area. The following policies therefore highlight different elements of character, but avoid being prescriptive on style or suppressing creativity.

Community engagement found repeated focus from participants on the area's history and architectural heritage, the connectivity of the area for walking and cycling, and the need to increase availability of green spaces and river access. Keeping down the heights of buildings is of considerable importance to people who live in the area. The majority of the housing and heritage buildings in the area are between 2 to 3 stories high, with occasional taller landmarks, including church spires. Some newer build residences reach 4 stories. Some buildings in Anglia Square are of greater height. The massing and heights of buildings can have significant repercussions on the historic architecture, the character of the area, the view lines to landmarks, daylighting, and wind tunnel effects.

This is a "walkable" area and development needs to retain and enhance this characteristic. As well as local residents, many people transit the area on the way to work or come in for shopping or leisure activities.

The presence of a centre and residences for the visually impaired, and a significant amount of over 55s and sheltered housing means consideration of the specific needs of these demographics is important when planning the public realm. Safety of the public realm is critical, and public spaces which are dark and not overlooked can be

dangerous to transit alone. Buildings overlooking public spaces and good lighting improve safety.

Community focused public space has an important role. This is demonstrated by Anglia Square itself which, despite the deterioration of the surrounding buildings, is sheltered from wind and rain, is still a popular place for people to sit and forms a centre for social interaction and performance space for community theatre. The rough ground under the flyover was also mentioned by the community as a potential useful public realm, particularly as already sheltered from sun and rain.

Environment - Green and Blue Infrastructure

Major flooding occurred in the area in 1912. Increasing extremes of weather due to climate change can lead to torrential rainfall. Hard surfaces prevent absorption of the rain leading to flooding. Thus, water permeable surface materials should be used wherever possible and flood risk mitigated in design.

Loss of biodiversity is of increasing concern worldwide, yet cities can provide important habitats. Design should consider the needs of wildlife and aim to support and enhance biodiversity, for example by preservation and provision of trees and hedgerows and by linking of habitats, maintaining and enhancing or providing green corridors to link green spaces. The River Wensum and environs are also of paramount importance.

The importance of green spaces for people's well-being is well understood. Green spaces are key for physical and mental health and in creation of community cohesion and wellbeing. In an urban area where many residents have no private outside space, public areas with trees and other vegetation are essential for people to meet, sit, picnic and exercise, and for children to play.

The Conservation Area Appraisal already notes the importance, and relative rarity, of green spaces and trees within the area. With increasing population more and improved public green space, parks and play areas will be needed.

Green spaces include the riverbanks, trees and groups of trees, local parks, recreation areas, churchyards, roundabouts and other roadside grass, trees or hedging. Trees and hedges are often at risk of removal or damage by development yet provide protection from pollution and habitat for wildlife. Local parks and recreational facilities provide public space for children and adults to enjoy and these should be protected or enhanced. The main local park is Gildencroft which has historic significance, as does the adjoining Quaker Cemetery.

For parks, green spaces and recreation and play areas to remain viable public amenities it is important that surrounding development does them no harm, does not impede and where possible improves access, and does not diminish but where possible increases the safety and utility of the areas.

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The River Wensum is a defining feature of the area, particularly where it is accessible. Future planning should preserve, extend and enhance the trees and green spaces beside the river, enhance the accessibility and opportunities for enjoyment of the river and follow the intentions of the GNLP that the riverside walkway become a continuous public facility.

NOW3: Heritage, Character and Identity

1. Development should be designed for the specific site and context to reinforce Norwich over the Wensum's locally distinctive sense of place and to complement the surrounding townscape character in terms of height, scale, massing and the relationship of frontages to surrounding streets and spaces.
2. Development should complement the character and appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area, including the following elements of character:
 - a. townscape character in many streets based on rear-of-pavement building frontages, which create a sense of enclosure and definition to streets and spaces;
 - b. townscape character in some streets based on buildings set back behind small front gardens;
 - c. pedestrian access routes through and between buildings, linking to rear yards or other streets, with building frontages flanking the pedestrian routes and yards;
 - d. architectural quality and diversity, with contrasts in style and construction;
 - e. surviving sections of the historic City wall;
 - f. the pattern of public or semi-public green spaces, including parks;
 - g. historic churches and their churchyard settings, including walls, gates, graves and trees;
 - h. trees, groups of trees and greenery;
 - i. the river and its green environs;
 - j. the varied palette of materials, including flint, red brick, timber-frame construction, stone, timber, render, plaster, glass, cast iron, metal panels and details, slate and clay tiles.
3. Development should take opportunities to preserve or enhance:
 - a. surviving sections of the historic City wall;
 - b. historic churches as key historic landmarks and their churchyard settings as key historic spaces, including walls, gates, graves and trees.
4. Historic shopfronts or surviving parts of historic shopfronts should be retained, including where ground floor frontage units change to non-commercial uses, and where historic shopfronts have been removed previously, their reinstatement will be supported.
5. Signage should be designed sensitively for the specific building or location, to complement the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
6. Development should take opportunities to maintain or enhance views towards historic landmarks, including the church towers and spires.
7. Extensions and alterations to historic buildings will be supported where:

- a. The quality of the scheme is appropriate to the sensitivity of the building and its context within the City Centre Conservation Area;**
- b. Any extension complements the existing building in its form, massing and quality of materials;**
- c. The scheme avoids obliterating or destroying any features that contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of listed buildings and/or the character or appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area.**

Interpretation

The policy highlights aspects of character in terms of townscape, layout and buildings. This is intended to guide the form of new development.

The intention of the policy is not to impose stylistic imitation or to suppress creativity or prevent innovative green design. Indeed, one of the characteristics identified is architectural diversity. But the policy is intended to address the problem of generic, 'anywhere' design, including 'off-the-peg' housing estates with layouts based on highway standards and division into standard plots, rather than urban design and contextual analysis.

The characteristics in Clause 2 should inform the design of development. Clearly, they apply differently in different parts of the area, so the specific local context needs to be considered.

The policy applies to listed buildings and unlisted buildings in the City Centre Conservation Area. Although the following map includes locally listed buildings (identified by the local authority), it should be noted that all buildings in the Neighbourhood Area are designated, either as listed buildings or unlisted buildings within the Conservation Area.

In addition to walling and roofing, features of buildings that contribute to special interest could include windows, doors, chimneys, mouldings, constructional details, historic shopfronts, decoration and other architectural or functional features.

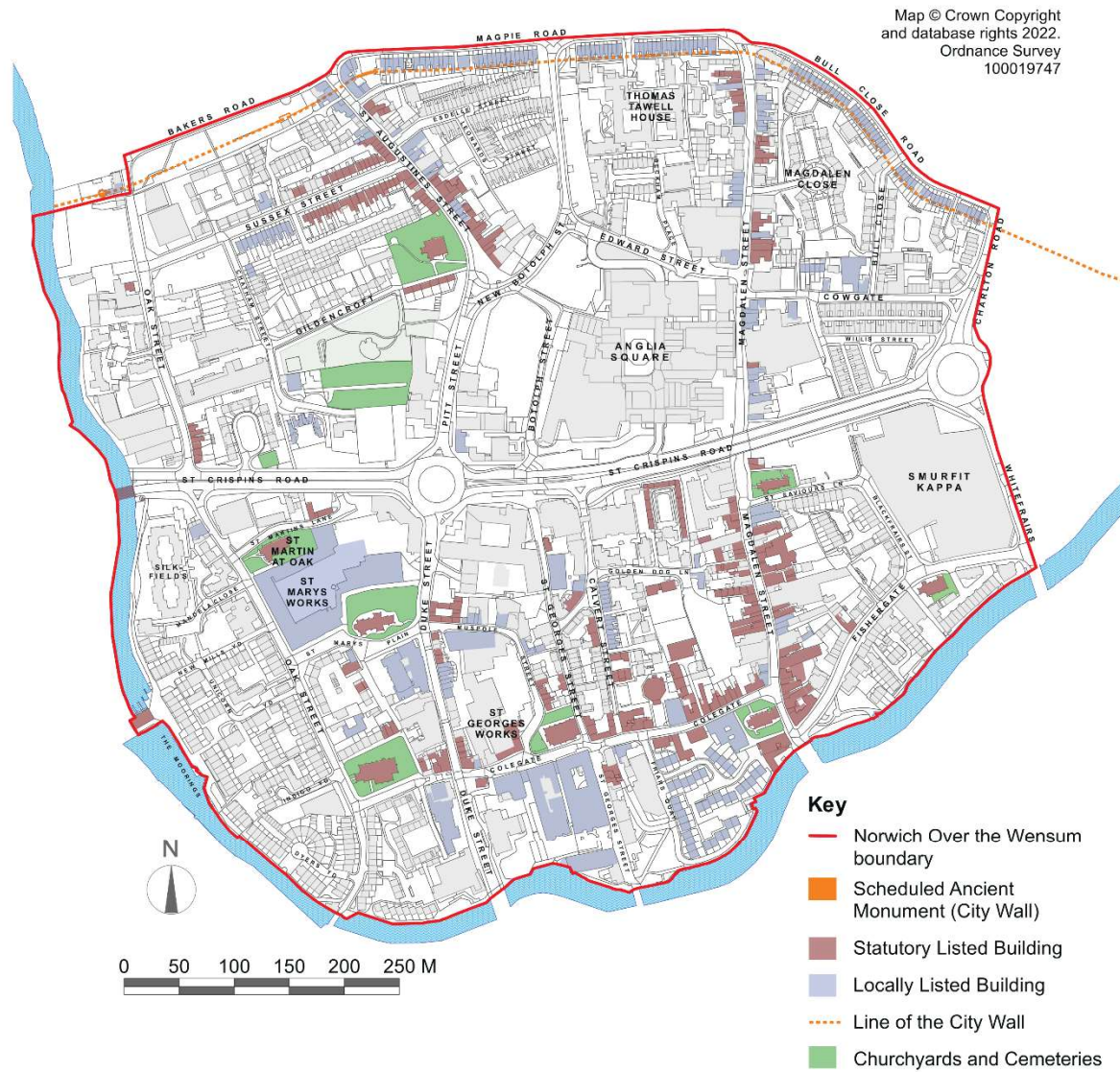
In considering impacts on views, the views identified in the Conservation Area appraisal should be taken into account.

The policy may be helpful in guiding the application of special statutory duties for conservation areas in Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Consideration of views within and across the Neighbourhood Area could include sightlines towards landmarks outside of the Neighbourhood Area, for example towards the City Hall, Cathedral, Castle or the dome of Norwich University of the Arts building.

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Map 3 - Heritage Designations



NOW4: Sustainable Urban Design

1. Development should create a high-quality public realm, to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area, providing a safe, convenient and attractive environment for pedestrians, including:
 - a. taking opportunities to create attractive new urban or green spaces to support recreation, social interaction and other community or economic activities;
 - b. incorporating high-quality landscape design as an integral part of the scheme, including planting of hedges and garden and street trees;
 - c. providing active frontages with doors, windows or other features to provide overlooking and natural surveillance to streets and spaces;
 - d. creating connections to existing pedestrian routes and green infrastructure and taking opportunities to enhance the permeability of the surrounding area;
 - e. catering for the needs of older people and people with limited mobility or visual impairment or other disabilities.
2. Development should be constructed using high quality and durable materials to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area, and support will be given to use of:
 - a. traditional and local materials;
 - b. recycled materials;
 - c. appropriate materials and construction that minimise carbon use.
3. Housing should have screened storage space for bins and recycling, where possible located away from the public realm.
4. Servicing areas for commercial development should be located and screened to minimise adverse visual impacts on the public realm and street scene.
5. Development should include sustainable drainage as an integral part of the design, to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area, and hard surfaced areas should use water permeable materials where possible.
6. Lighting schemes that require planning permission will be supported, providing lighting units are sensitively designed and discretely located.
7. Development should include positive design features to reduce carbon impacts and support biodiversity, taking account of the following Green Guidance Note, and support will be given to creative or innovative designs that preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the City Centre Conservation Area.

Interpretation

This policy sets general requirements in terms of sustainable design, including sustainable buildings and creation of safe and permeable environments for pedestrians. The policy should be applied together with Policy NOW3, which deals with more specific elements of historic character, and NOW6, which deals with active travel.

The policy should not be interpreted as requiring imitation or precluding innovative or creative design.

The policy should be applied according to the scale and nature of the development. For example, some clauses relate to layout, so would not apply to some minor forms of development.

In considering lighting schemes, including floodlighting of historic buildings, there is often a balance to be made between safety, creative building lighting, light pollution and impacts on wildlife.

The following Green Guidance Note includes positive design features to reduce carbon impacts and support biodiversity.

Green Guidance Note

In designing development to reduce carbon use and support biodiversity, the following features should be considered.

Life Cycle, Embodied Energy and Building Specifications

The reuse and refurbishment of historic buildings retains the embodied energy used in their materials and construction. reuse and retrofitting of existing buildings is encouraged, whilst avoiding harm to architectural or historic interest.

Where considering redeveloping buildings, the durability and embodied energy of materials should be carefully considered. There can be trade-offs between durability and embodied energy. Similarly, use of local, recycled and recyclable materials should be considered. Spoil should be retained on-site and be incorporated into the redevelopment, where possible.

Building specifications could include:

- use of efficient heating and cooling systems, or design to reduce dependency on heating and cooling systems;
- superior insulation properties and airtightness;
- orientation of windows to take account of solar gain, shading and air quality;
- natural ventilation and air flow;
- living (green) walls or roofs as part of the design;
- flexible internal spaces and storage spaces, to accommodate changing demands.

In well-insulated properties, overheating can be a real challenge in summer months, so natural ventilation and air flow are important.

Landscape, Rainwater and Drainage

Landscape design has implications for quality of environment and biodiversity. Design features could include:

- use of traditional hedges for boundary treatments, to create a greener environment;
- use of native species in planting, or other species with high environmental values.
- rainwater capture, storage and reuse (grey water) such as connecting rainwater goods to allow water collection;
- Inclusion of rain gardens;
- sustainable urban drainage as an integral part of the design and landscape;
- using permeable materials for hard surfaced areas;
- using green screens (foliage grown around a framework) to screen servicing or parking areas.

Energy

Micro and local energy generation can be incorporated into development, including heat pumps, rooftop photovoltaics and other technologies.

Environmental Standards

Compliance with BREEAM or other environmental standards is encouraged.

NOW5: Green and Blue Infrastructure

1. Development of sites next to the river Wensum should:
 - a. be designed to enhance the river setting, through the layout and design and orientation of buildings and landscape;
 - b. retain any mature trees and hedges and complement and take opportunities to enhance the green and natural character and biodiversity of the river and its environs;
 - c. provide public access and a path to the river frontage, where possible with ungated links to existing sections of the Riverside Walk;
 - d. not cause or lead to any deterioration in water quality.
2. Mature trees, groups of trees and hedges should be retained where possible for their character, amenity and biodiversity values, and:
 - a. Should be incorporated into the design and layout of the scheme; and
 - b. steps should be taken to protect them and their roots during construction; or
 - c. where loss is unavoidable, replacement trees and/or hedges should be provided, of similar species or other species with high environmental value, to provide a similar or enhanced level of amenity and biodiversity.
3. Development should take opportunities to enhance green and blue infrastructure and support wildlife habitats and connectivity, including where appropriate:
 - a. Incorporating landscape design with habitat value;
 - b. planting in gaps between existing hedgerows and trees;
 - c. creating or enhancing green corridors and links between green spaces.
4. Development within Gildencroft Park will be supported where:
 - a. it is directly related to the recreational use, maintenance or management of the park;
 - b. it is designed to preserve or enhance the green, open, landscape and historic character of the park.
5. Development affecting parks, green spaces, or play areas should not harm and should take opportunities to enhance their accessibility, amenity and safety.

Interpretation

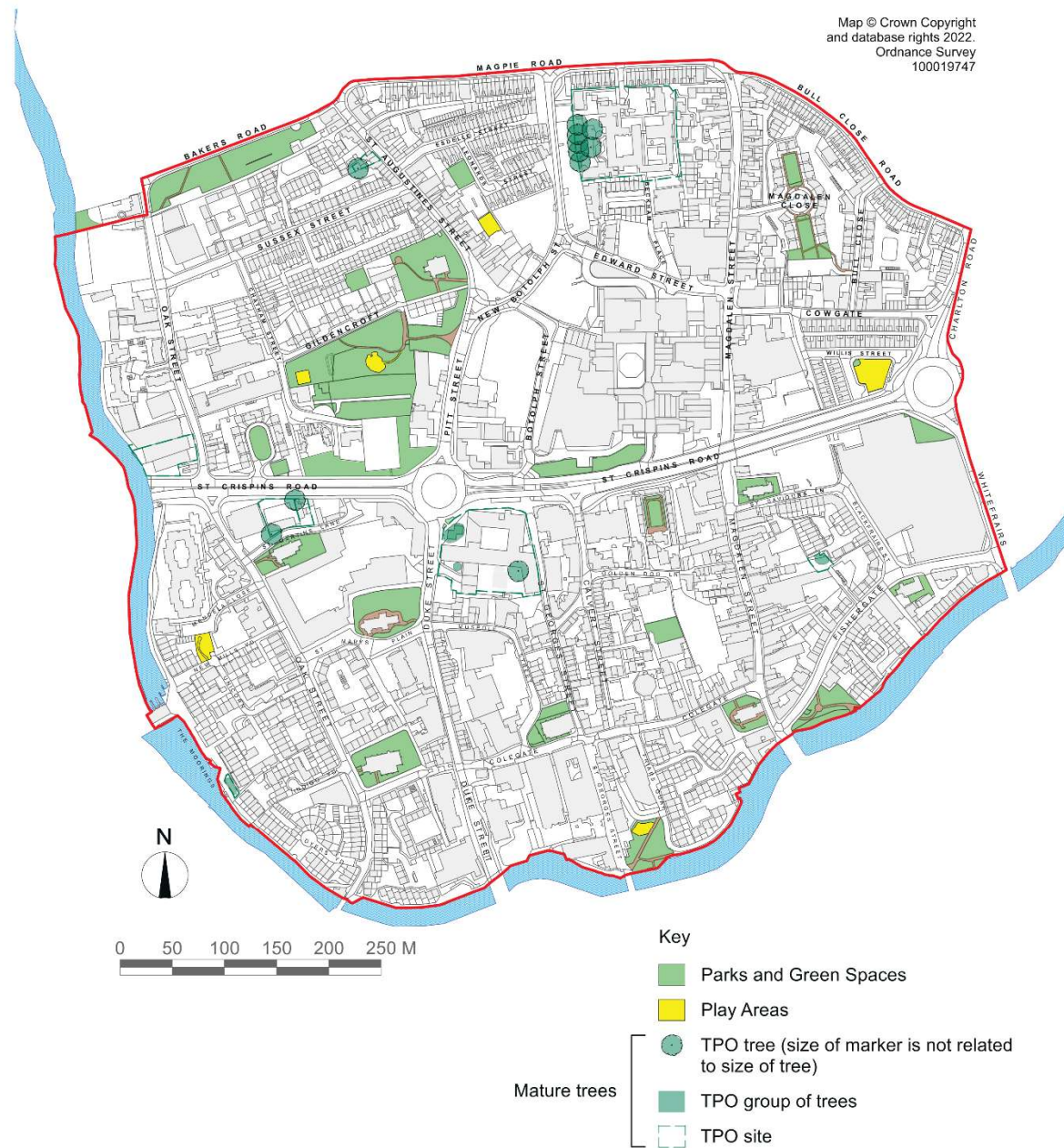
The policy applies closely with Policies NOW3 and NOW4. It seeks to protect open spaces and consider impacts of development on those spaces.

The loss of green spaces would be covered by Policy DM8 in the Local Plan.

Landscape proposals should show tree planting details and include soil cell systems where trees are in close proximity to hard landscape. Trees require adequate aerated soil to suit their species, to ensure longevity.

In addition, the policy aims to conserve the green and natural character of the river, which is also part of the character of the City Centre Conservation Area, and to create access to the full river frontage. Development that compromises such access, for example by placing buildings or fences too close to the river edge, would not meet the requirements of the policy.

Map 4 – River Edge and Green and Recreational Spaces



5. Infrastructure

Purpose

The policy in this Chapter seeks to promote sustainable and active travel, including walking and cycling.

Rationale

Chapter 9 of the NPPF deals with promoting sustainable transport. This includes consideration of impacts of development, existing and proposed infrastructure, promotion of walking, cycling, and public transport, environmental impacts, and movement, streets, and parking in the design of schemes.

The potential large increase in population allowed for within the Greater Norwich Local Plan 2024 means preservation and improvement of infrastructure is particularly important for this area.

Policies in the GNLP include:

Policy 4: Strategic Infrastructure (dealing with transport, but with less emphasis on active travel in urban areas).

The Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to promote the Neighbourhood Area as a walkable neighbourhood and this is the emphasis of the following policy, NOW6.

The Norwich development management policies local plan (adopted December 2014) includes the following policies, of particular relevance to infrastructure:

Policy DM1 Achieving and delivering sustainable development
Policy DM3 Design principles
Policy DM28 Encouraging sustainable travel
Policy DM32 Car Free or Low Car Housing

The compactness of the area and the proximity to the main city centre, means it is highly suitable for active travel, both walking and cycling. It is a low car ownership area (55.1% households with no car compared to 25.8% for England as a whole in 2011 Census data). It is also a thoroughfare for many city bus routes with a key stop within the Large District Centre on Magdalen Street. Sustainable travel by public transport is a key facility both for residents and for bringing workers and consumers into the area.

The presence of the Vision Norfolk Centre and Residences within the area, as well as elderly and sheltered accommodation, increases the importance of safe pedestrian

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routes, whilst the increased student population since new residences have been built will increase the number of cyclists who also need consideration. It is therefore important that any development improves connectivity and safety for pedestrians and cyclists, including connectivity to public transport.

Considerations of climate change mean that infrastructure should include provision for charging electric vehicles of all types including electric bicycles and provide secure, covered cycle storage to encourage active travel.

NOW6: Sustainable and Active Travel

- 1. Development likely to generate additional journeys should meet the travel needs of the Neighbourhood Area's diverse population, including people who use sustainable forms of transport or participate in active travel.**
- 2. Development should promote active travel, including by:**
 - a. providing secure and covered storage space for cycles and other personal vehicles, with electrical charging outlets;**
 - b. creating safe and convenient connections to existing pedestrian and cycle routes and public transport routes, and taking opportunities to enhance pedestrian and cycle permeability;**
 - c. catering for the needs of older people and people with limited mobility or visual impairment or other disabilities.**
- 3. Vehicular access, circulation, servicing and parking in development schemes should have no adverse impacts on the safety, amenity or convenience of pedestrians and cyclists.**

Interpretation

The policy should be applied proportionate to the scale and nature of the development. For example, some parts of the policy relate only to development creating new layout.

Active travel includes walking and cycling.

Sustainable travel includes Public Transport, bus transport being the major mode of public transport provision in our area. It could also include cycle taxis or taxi-boats.

The policy seeks to reinforce the area's character as a walkable neighbourhood. It places emphasis on cycling and pedestrian permeability and connectivity.

To meet the requirements of the policy, cycle storage should be provided in for commercial development and for all new dwellings. Communal storage could be provided for apartments.

Parking standards are set by the Local Plan.

Infrastructure Priorities

To complement the previous policies, this Neighbourhood Plan has the following priorities in the use of Section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy or other planning infrastructure monies:

- The provision of new cycle routes, to link existing routes.
- Improvement of pedestrian facilities, including for people with limited mobility and also crossings in convenient locations.
- Improvements to the river walk, including access.
- Improvements to the public realm and public spaces.

6. Acknowledgements and Contact

7.1 Acknowledgements

The Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum would like to thank all residents, businesses, and community organisations who contributed their time, ideas and feedback during the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan.

The Forum is particularly grateful to members of the Steering Group for their continued work and dedication in developing the plan, and to officers at Norwich City Council for their advice and support throughout the process.

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- Technical support
- Funding support
- Providing the demographic data study for our area
- Arranging and supporting the SEA and HRA

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- Support with plan writing
- Support forming a Neighbourhood Forum and navigating the plan development and approval process

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- Ongoing meetings and advice throughout the process
- Undertaking the roll of Accountable Body for our funds
- Undertaking the screening for SEA and HRA

CMStA (Cathedral, Magdalen St and St Augustine's Neighbourhood Group)

- For their initial work towards neighbourhood planning in the area

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- Providing space and kind hospitality

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- Providing space and kind hospitality

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- Providing space and kind hospitality

Cactus Café Bar, 102 Magdalen Street, for

- Providing space and kind hospitality

Norwich Theatre Playhouse, 42-58 St Georges Street, for

- Providing space and kind hospitality

7.2 Contacts

For further information about the Norwich Over the Wensum Neighbourhood Forum, please contact:

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