

Implementation of the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy

Supplementary Planning Document

March 2026



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1. Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) supports the interpretation and effective implementation of the following Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) policies:

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

The SPD is a material consideration when the councils make decisions on planning applications. It applies to the administrative areas of Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council, and South Norfolk Council, excluding the Broads Authority Executive Area.

1.2 These policies cover a wide range of topics, however core to their main aims is the successful delivery of high-quality multifunctional green infrastructure in the right locations to support growth, enhance the environment and create sustainable places that meet the needs of current and future residents. Green infrastructure is embedded across multiple local plan policies reflecting its integral role in achieving the plan's strategic objectives. This is key for providing green infrastructure both at site level and through the coordinated implementation of Community Infrastructure Levy.

1.3 The Greater Norwich authorities and CBA Consultants prepared a new Green Infrastructure Strategy, which was completed in March 2025. The Strategy provides a flexible framework for guiding and prioritising the most suitable types, locations and scale of green infrastructure needed to support future growth. The document provides a key evidence base for implementing planning policy, decision-making for planning applications and infrastructure investment. The Strategy reflects significant changes in

national and local policy, including the Environment Act 2021 and Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework (2023), and aligns with the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

1.4 By adopting this SPD, the Greater Norwich authorities seek to give greater planning weight to the new Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy evidence base enabling it to be used as a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications. This SPD focuses on how the evidence base should be used and is intended to assist both Development Management officers and developers in prioritising and delivering green infrastructure through a collaborative and consistent approach.

1.5 The Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy is contained in Appendix 1 of this SPD. The Strategic Delivery Plan which accompanies the Strategy is contained in Appendix 2 of this SPD. The Area Profiles for different parts of Greater Norwich are contained in Appendix 3 of this SPD. There are also a number of other useful documents associated with the Strategy which do not form part of this SPD: <https://www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/article/67059/Green-Infrastructure-Strategy>



2. Purpose

2. Purpose of the Supplementary Planning Document

2.1 This SPD should be used to:

- Assist developers with the layout and design of their proposals to include multi-functional green infrastructure;
- Assist in identifying the type and scale of green infrastructure that might be appropriate for development proposals whilst considering identified priorities, opportunities and addressing deficiencies.
- Assist in identifying where development proposals can help to deliver the strategic green infrastructure network through priorities, key objectives, and outcomes of the Strategy, Delivery Plan and Area Profiles;
- Assist with demonstrating how proposed green infrastructure in a planning application strengthens and enhances the network of Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridors and Priority Green Infrastructure Corridors ([Maps 5.1 and 5.2 Appendix 1](#));
- Assist in identifying where development proposals can help to deliver against the delivery themes and Strategic Green Infrastructure Initiatives ([Tables 2.1 - 2.4 and Maps 2.1 and 2.2 Appendix 2](#)) including the Strategic Green Infrastructure Corridors and Sites, and the Norwich Green Grid;



Broadland Country Park © Fisheye Images

2. Purpose

- 2.2 Each planning application will be assessed on its merits, and it will be up to the decision maker to determine if the proposal complies with the relevant local plan policies. However, the following example sets out how this SPD and the Strategy documents could be used:

Site assessment

- A developer uses [Maps 5.1 and 5.2](#) in the Strategy document (Appendix 1) to identify if their site would be likely to result in loss or harm to existing GI provision. The maps are also used to identify which sites would have opportunities to link up with the existing strategic GI network. [Maps A1.2 and A1.3](#) in the Delivery Plan (Appendix 2) are used to identify where a development site could be located to help address inequalities in existing GI provision.

Development design and layout.

- A developer uses the relevant Area Profile (Appendix 3), [Maps 2.1 and 2.2](#) and [Tables 2.1 - 2.4](#) in the Delivery Plan (Appendix 2) to identify which GI opportunities might be appropriate for their development site, acknowledging that expectations will likely differ between urban and rural areas. These opportunities can then be incorporated into the layout of the site (e.g. including open spaces for the new development or including an access point from the development site to an existing active travel route).

- A developer can also use the above information to identify features that could be included in the design of the development with additional multi-functional benefits such as tree planting (increase tree canopy cover to create shade and cooling) or incorporating sustainable drainage systems into landscaping schemes (to help with rainwater capture and help mitigate surface water flood risk).

Planning application

- A developer submits a planning application that includes:
 - A description and any technical specifications setting out how the development will link to and/or enhance the existing GI network including the GI measures proposed and how it contributes to the delivery priorities in the Delivery Plan.
 - A description of the additional benefits the proposed measures can provide.

2. Purpose

- 2.3 *This SPD is only concerned with the application of the Strategy in planning decision making.* The Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy has a significant number of other applications, for example as evidence for funding submissions or informing decisions on the expenditure of Community Infrastructure Levy. Whilst this SPD is not relevant to the consideration of those issues, the Strategy is a standalone evidence document that can still be used to inform decisions about the provision of green infrastructure outside of the planning applications process.



Sweetbriar Marshes © Fisheye Images

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.

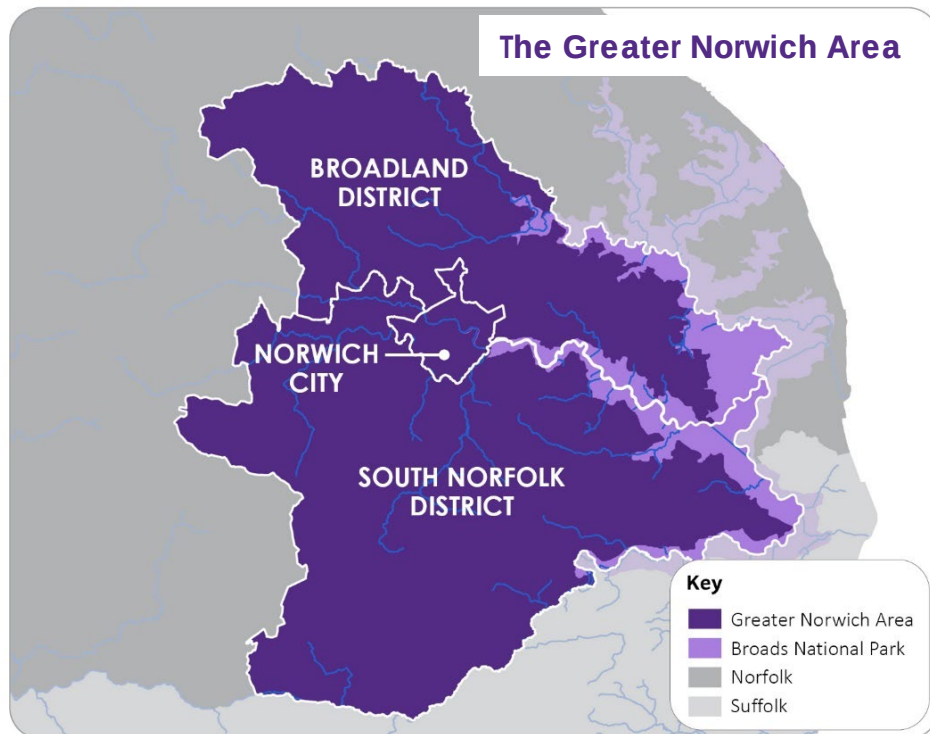
Accessibility Conformance Statement

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.

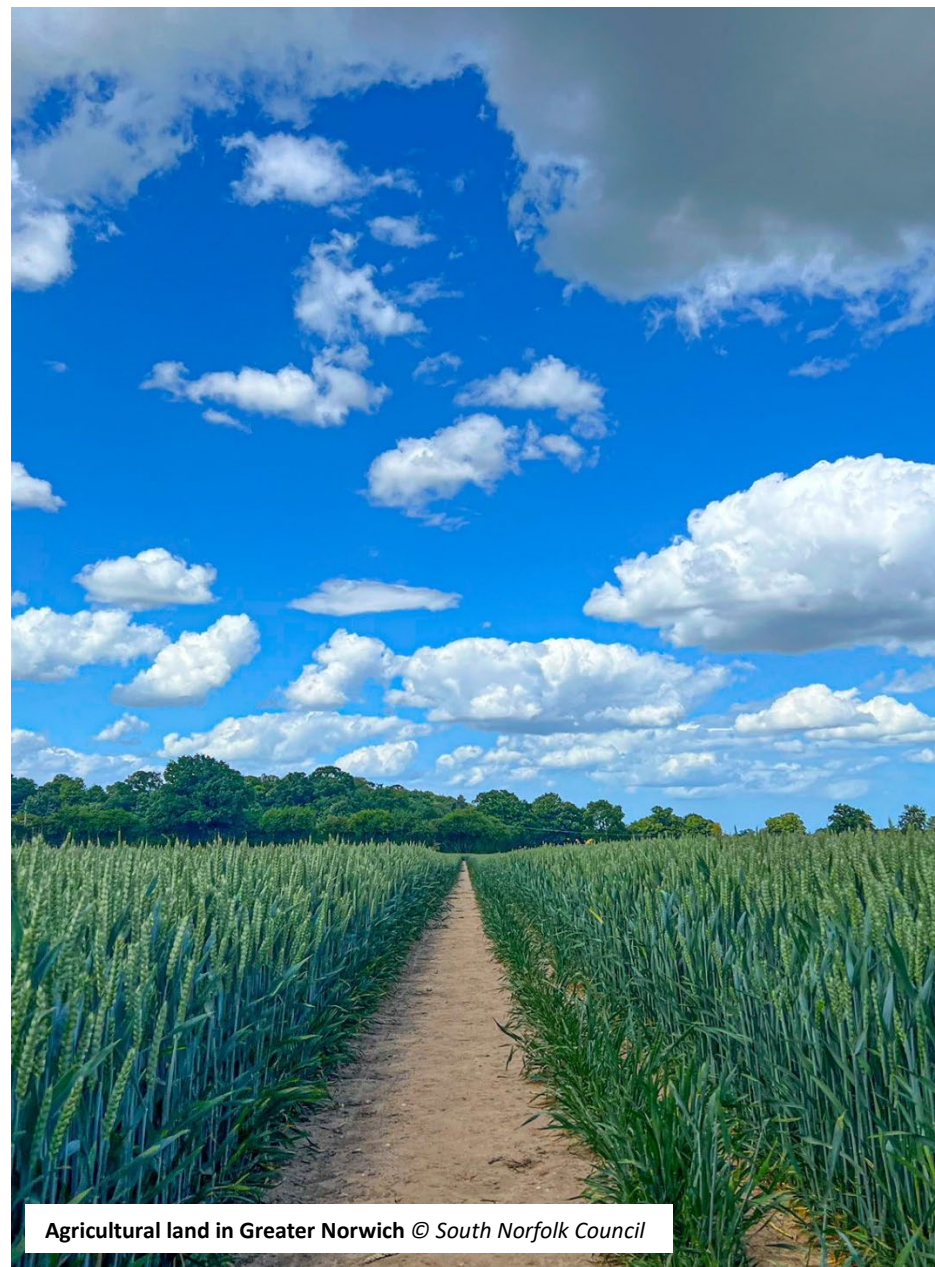
Key risks and opportunities for growth in Greater Norwich include increased flooding from extreme weather, urban heating, drought, soil erosion and changes to agriculture and habitat change. Agricultural and diffuse urban pollution on water quality is a particular issue for the area.

‘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



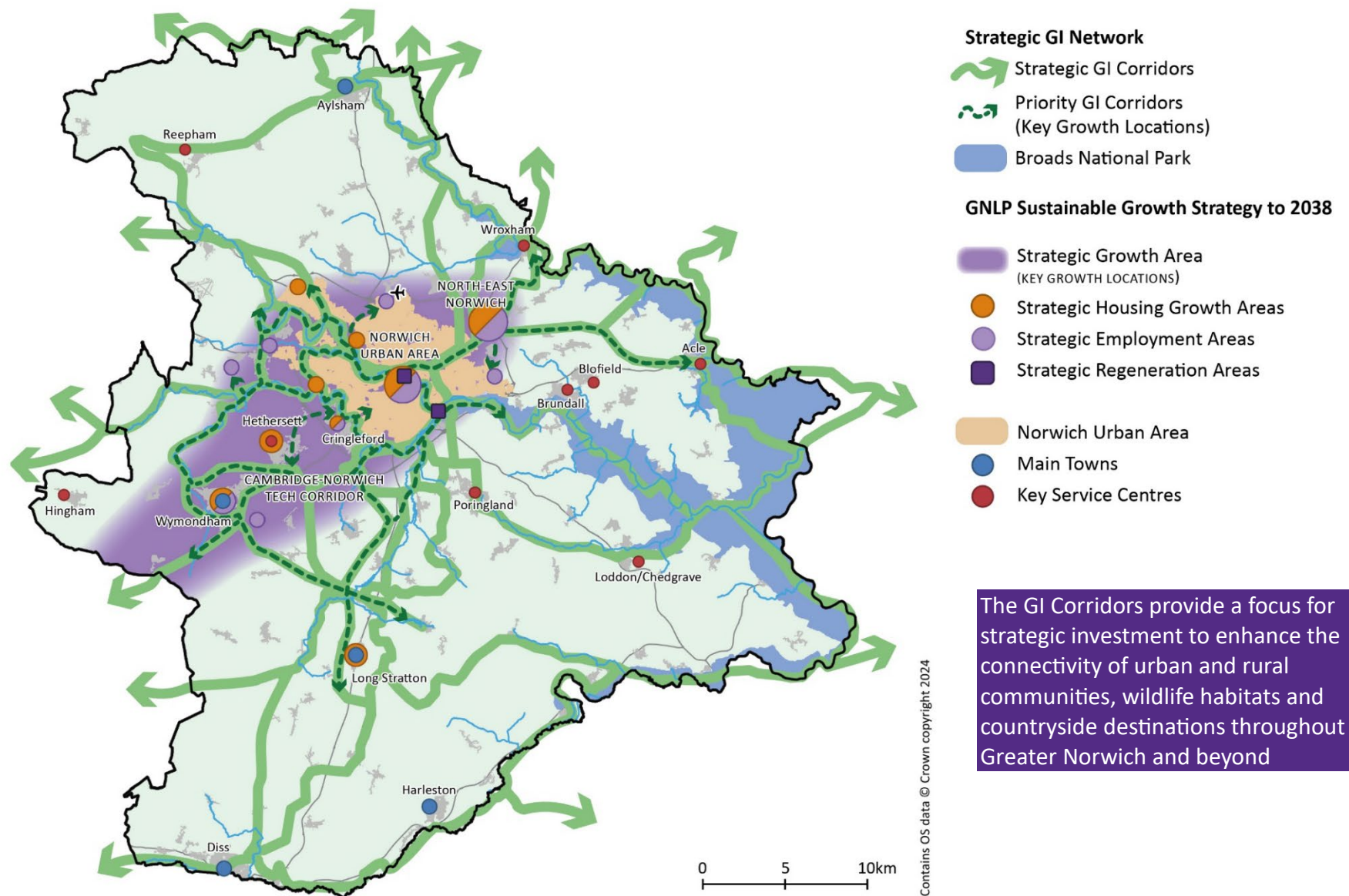
Our outcomes

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

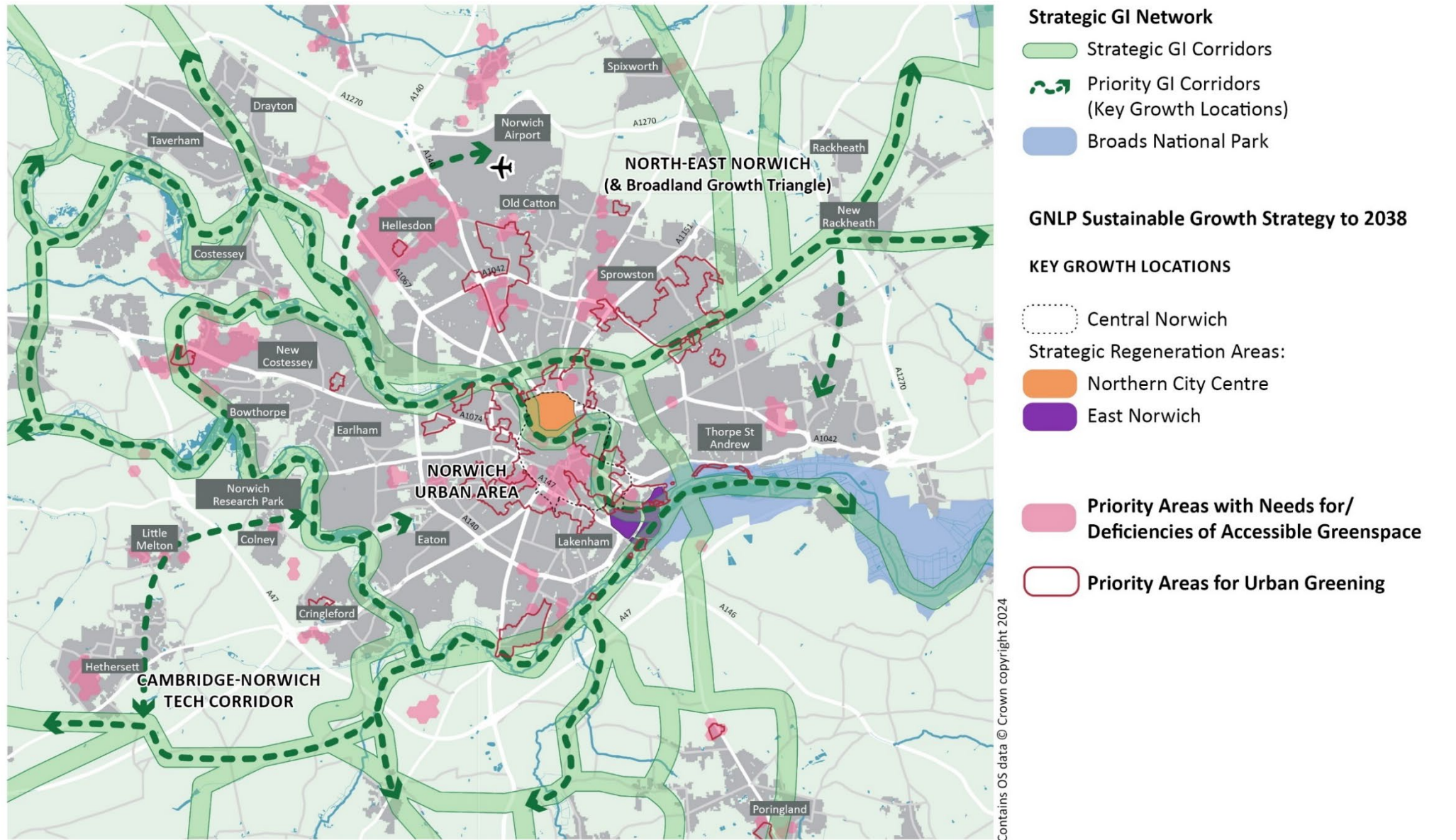


What our strategy looks like – “the big picture”

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

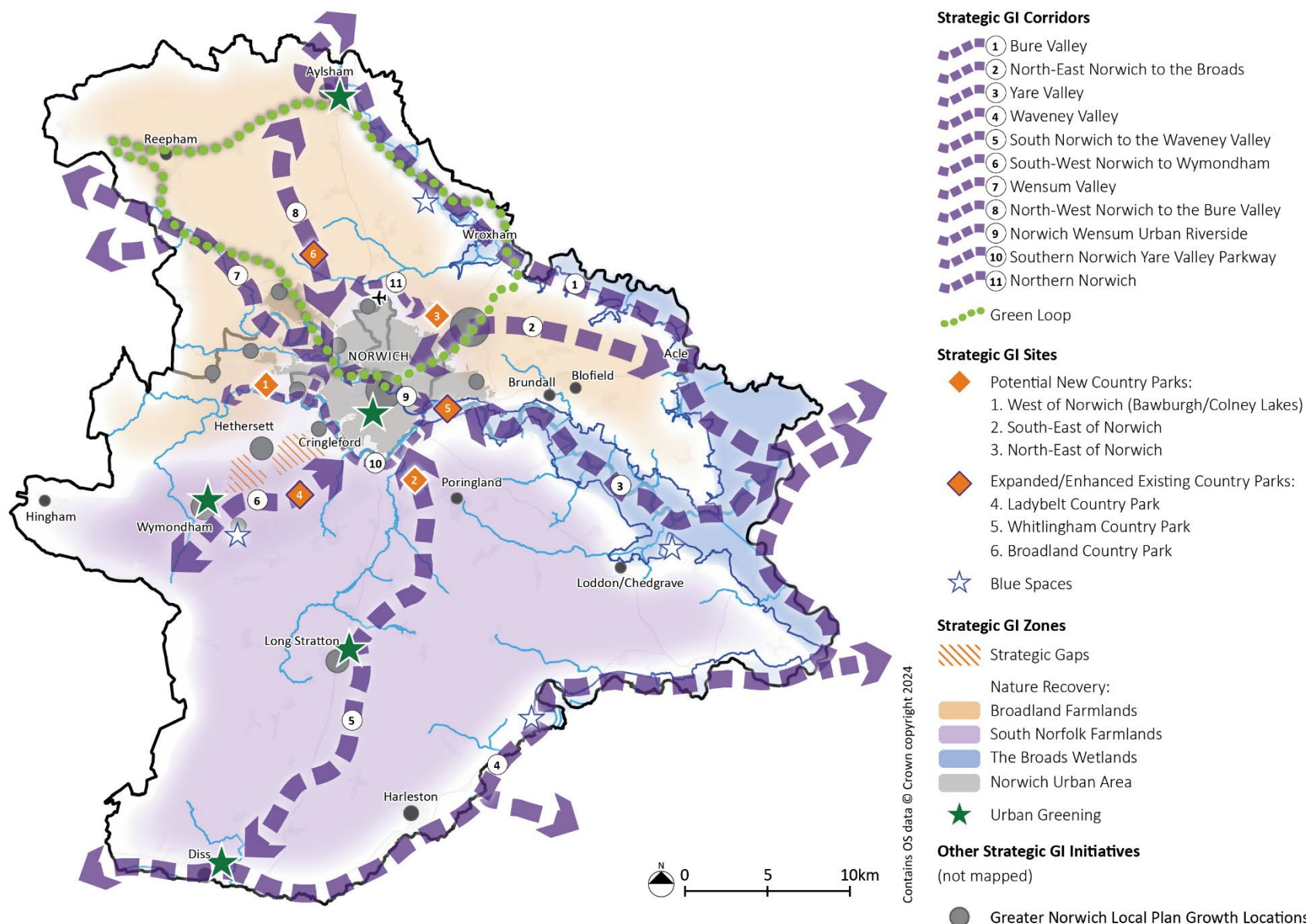


This map illustrates what our long-term spatial vision for developing a strategic multi-functional network of Green Infrastructure connecting people, places and nature in and around Norwich looks like

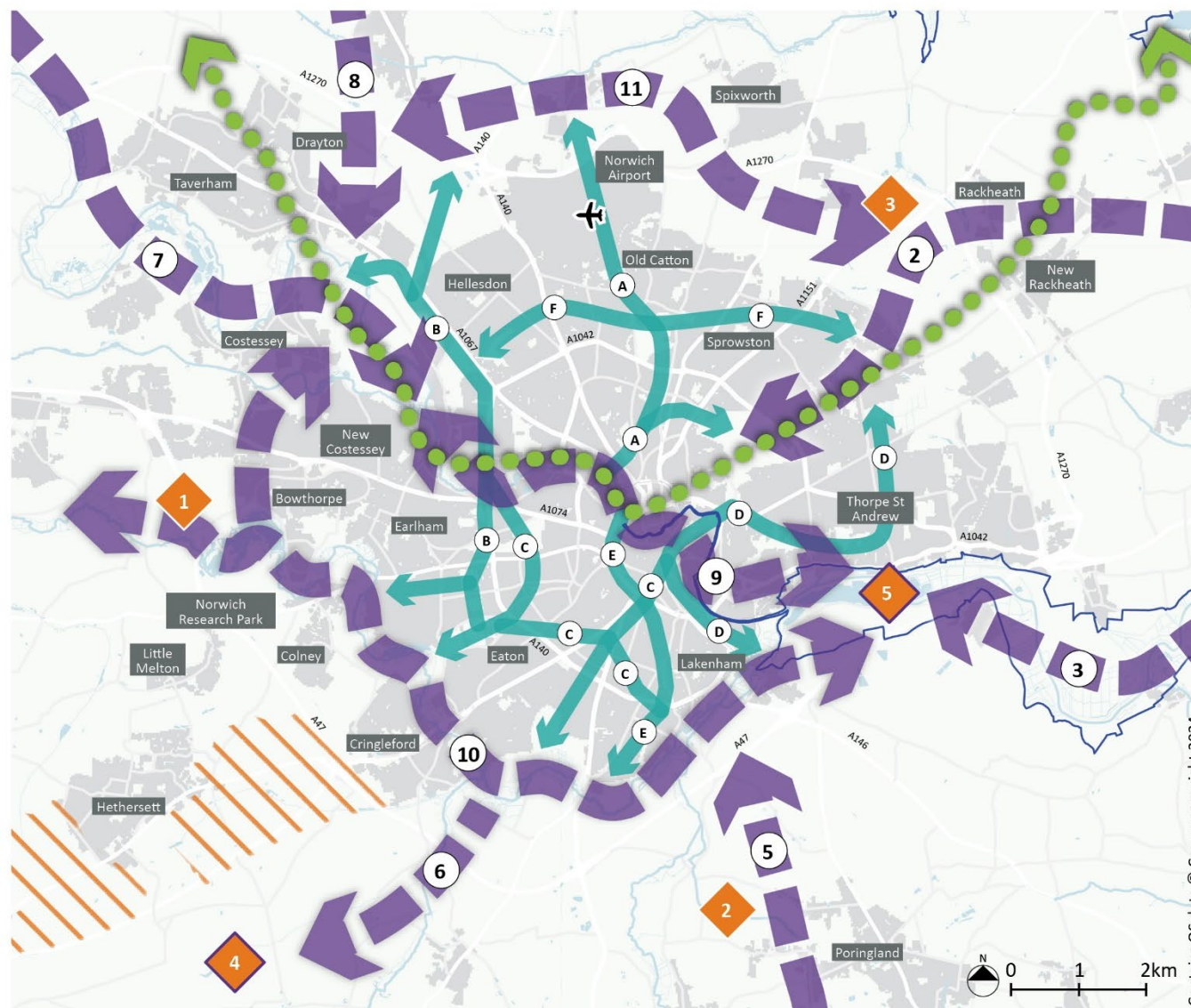


What we will deliver and where

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

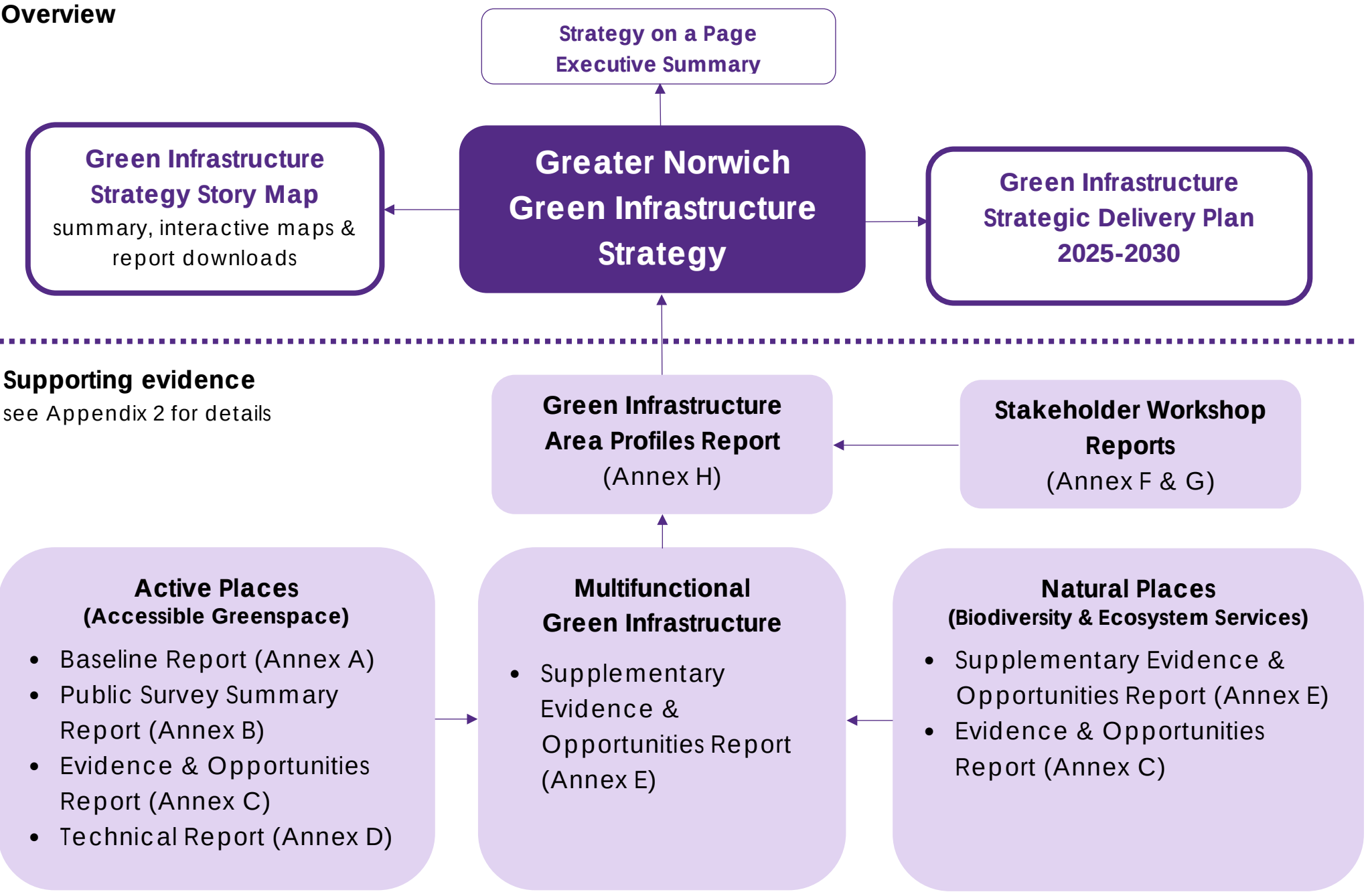
Strategic GI Zones

▨ 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.



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

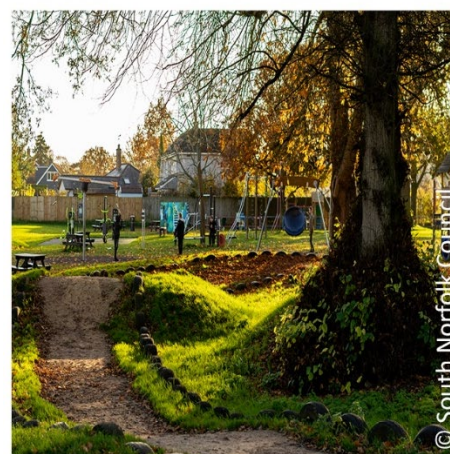
For the purposes of this GI Strategy, the term “greenspace” is used to describe any natural or semi-natural vegetated areas of land or water. This includes both private greenspace (e.g. grounds of private institutions and domestic gardens) and publicly accessible greenspace.

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).

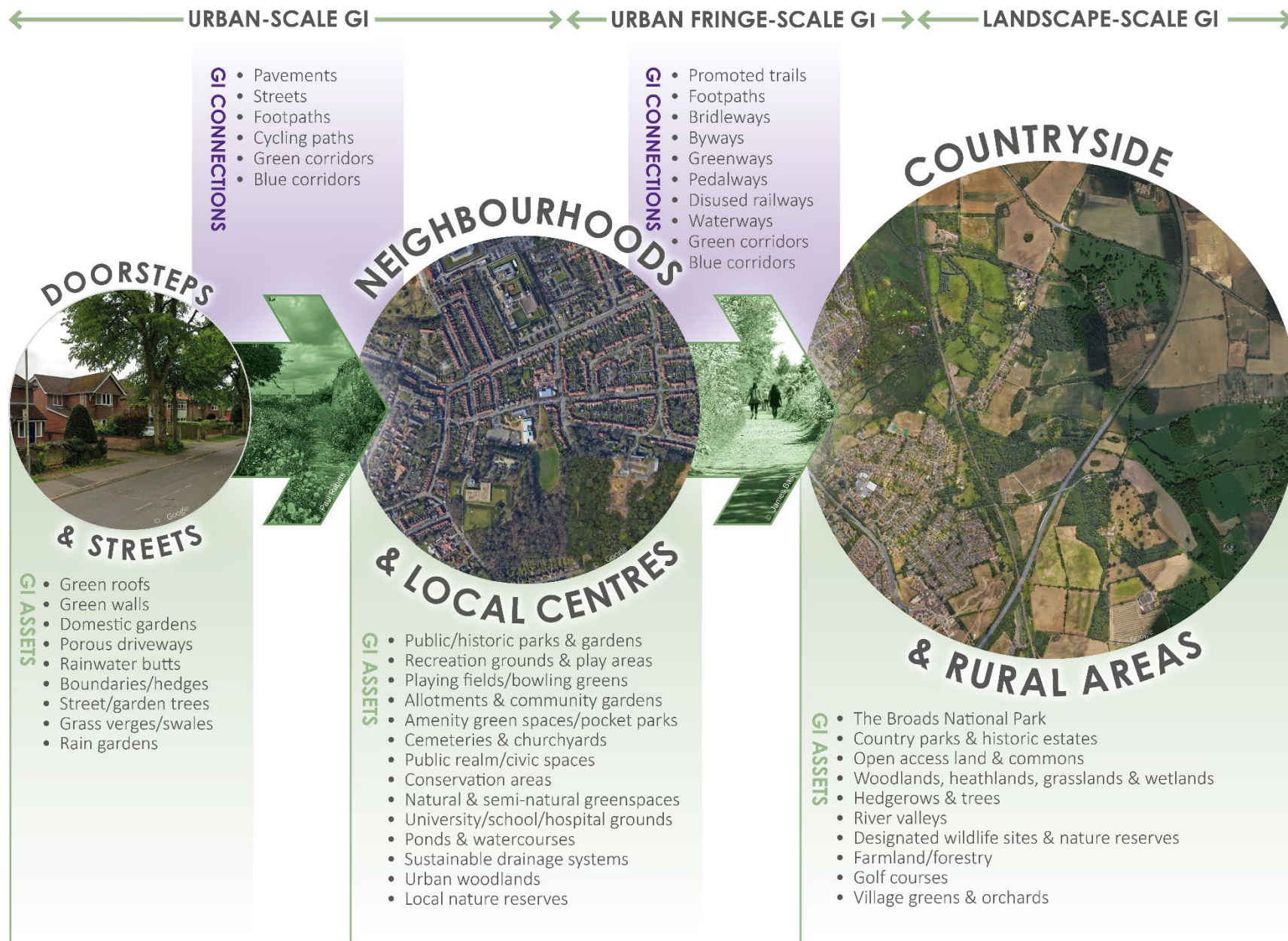
Accessible greenspace should be socially inclusive, safe, welcoming and well-managed.

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



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.

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

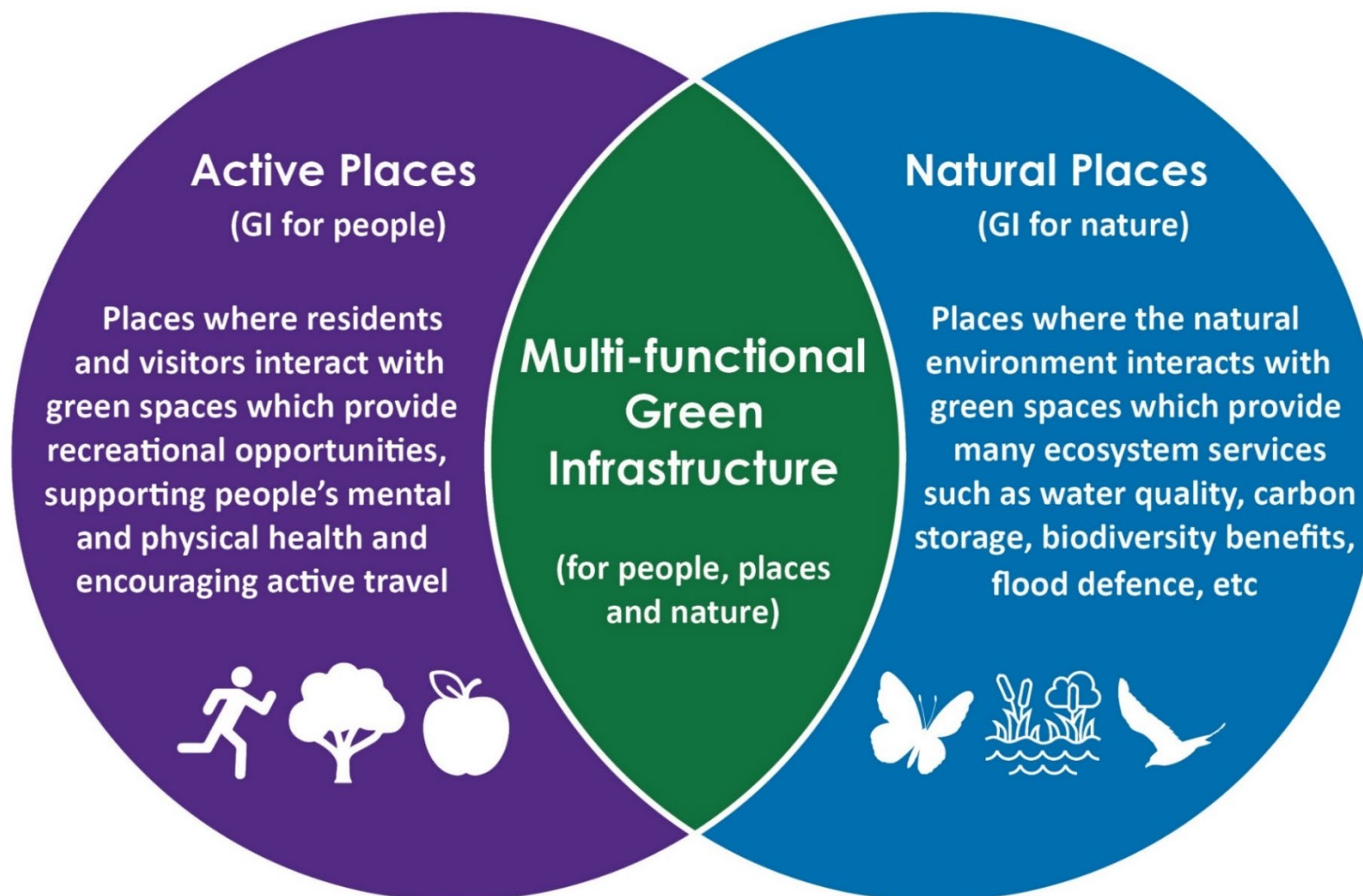
Developed in collaboration with local partners, we have adopted a strategic approach to delivering GI at a Greater Norwich level shaped by the Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework's principles.

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

Who has access to GI

Based on an approach adapted from Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (see **Annex A**), we estimate that over 39% of residents in Greater Norwich live within 200m of a doorstep green space of at least 0.5 hectares. This is higher than the national average of 15%.

- Residents in suburban areas in Broadland and South Norfolk have better access to doorstep greenspace than in Norwich.
- In Broadland, residents in the most affluent groups have better access to doorstep greenspace than in Norwich and South Norfolk
- Residents in the most deprived areas of Norwich are proportionally better served with access to doorstep greenspace than those in the most affluent groups
- The levels of inactivity by those of lower income groups in Norwich remains higher than those in the most affluent groups, despite access to green space being proportionally better
- Although access among deprived groups is moderately good, there are still some areas with deficiencies of access to greenspace within parts of the Mile Cross, Catton and Nelson wards in the city of Norwich

People living in our most deprived areas, the over 50s, those with a disability and ethnic minorities are identified by the Greater Norwich Physical Activity & Sports Strategy as some of the least active or engaged groups in Greater Norwich with respect to accessing and using green space.

What people value

Our public survey undertaken in 2023 (**Annex B**) found that Norwich City's urban parks and greenspaces were the most visited greenspaces in Greater Norwich – particularly Earlham Park, Eaton Park and areas around the University, and Mousehold Heath.

The most visited sites in South Norfolk were Whitlingham Country Park, Caister St Edmund and High Ash Farm. Blickling Estate was the most visited site in Broadland, highlighting the links between greenspaces and heritage.

The survey revealed a diverse range of motivations for visits to greenspaces with the most common reasons being:

- Engaging in physical exercise
- Walking dogs
- Exploring and being close to nature
- Socialising and spending time with friends/family
- Relaxation and unwinding



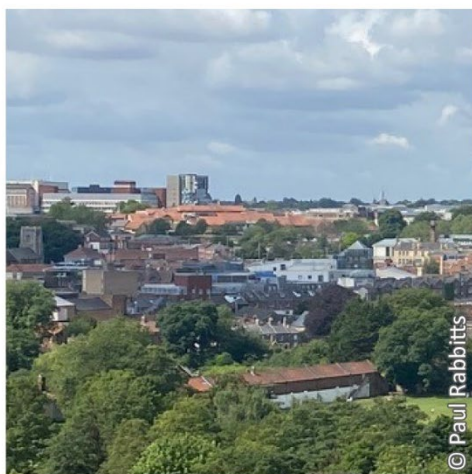
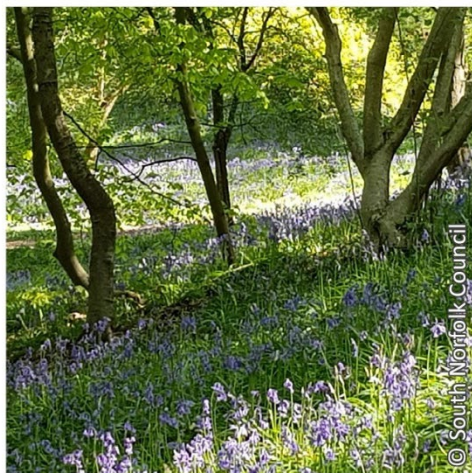
Other reasons included tending to allotments, providing educational and recreational opportunities for children, participating in community events and using greenspaces as commuting routes.

As illustrated by this wordcloud, recurring feedback from the survey was the importance of providing greenspaces for people and wildlife.

Suggested improvements to greenspaces expressed a desire for environmental sustainability, conservation, community engagement, improved access and appreciation of nature.

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.

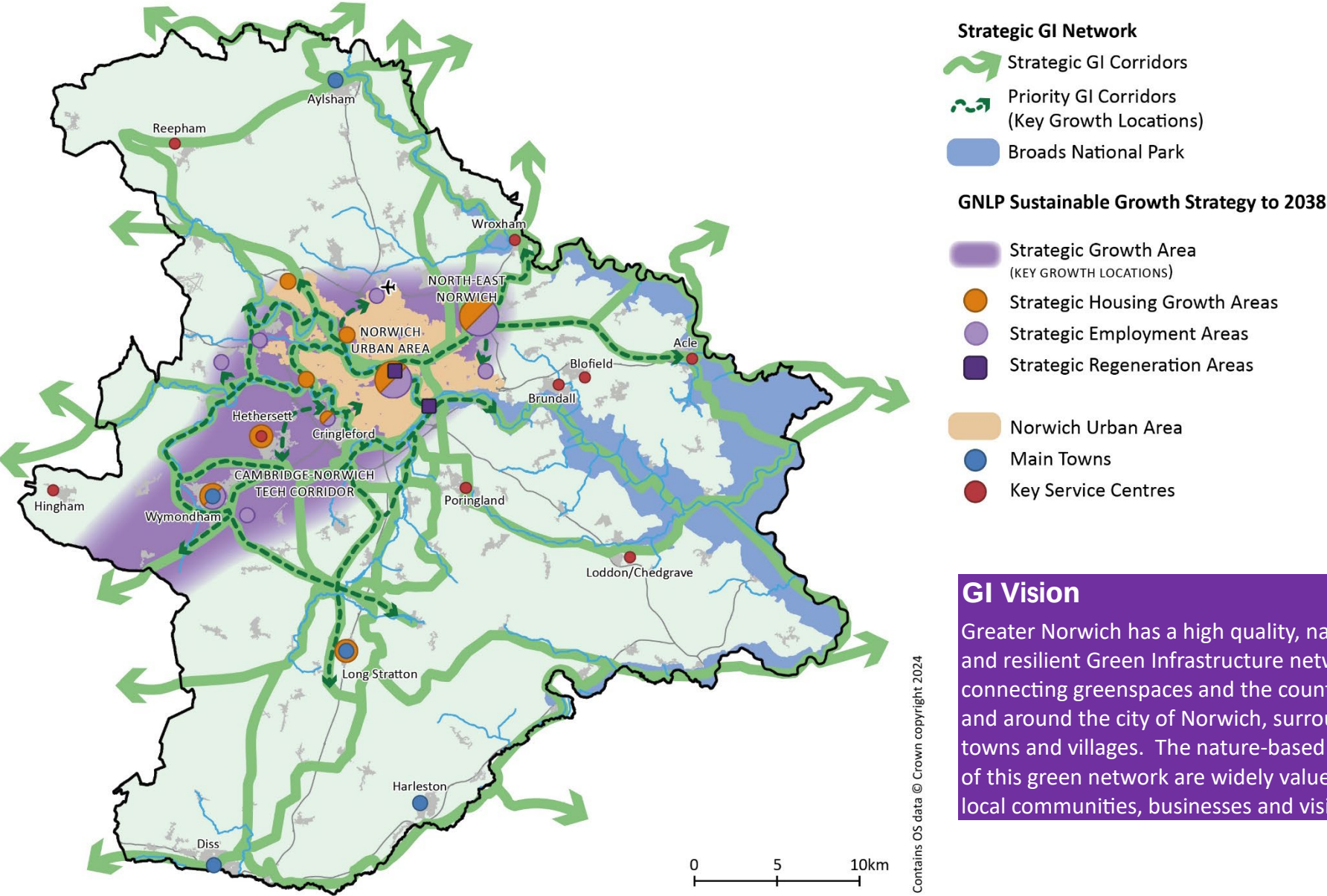
Strategic Growth Area – Key Growth Locations

- **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)

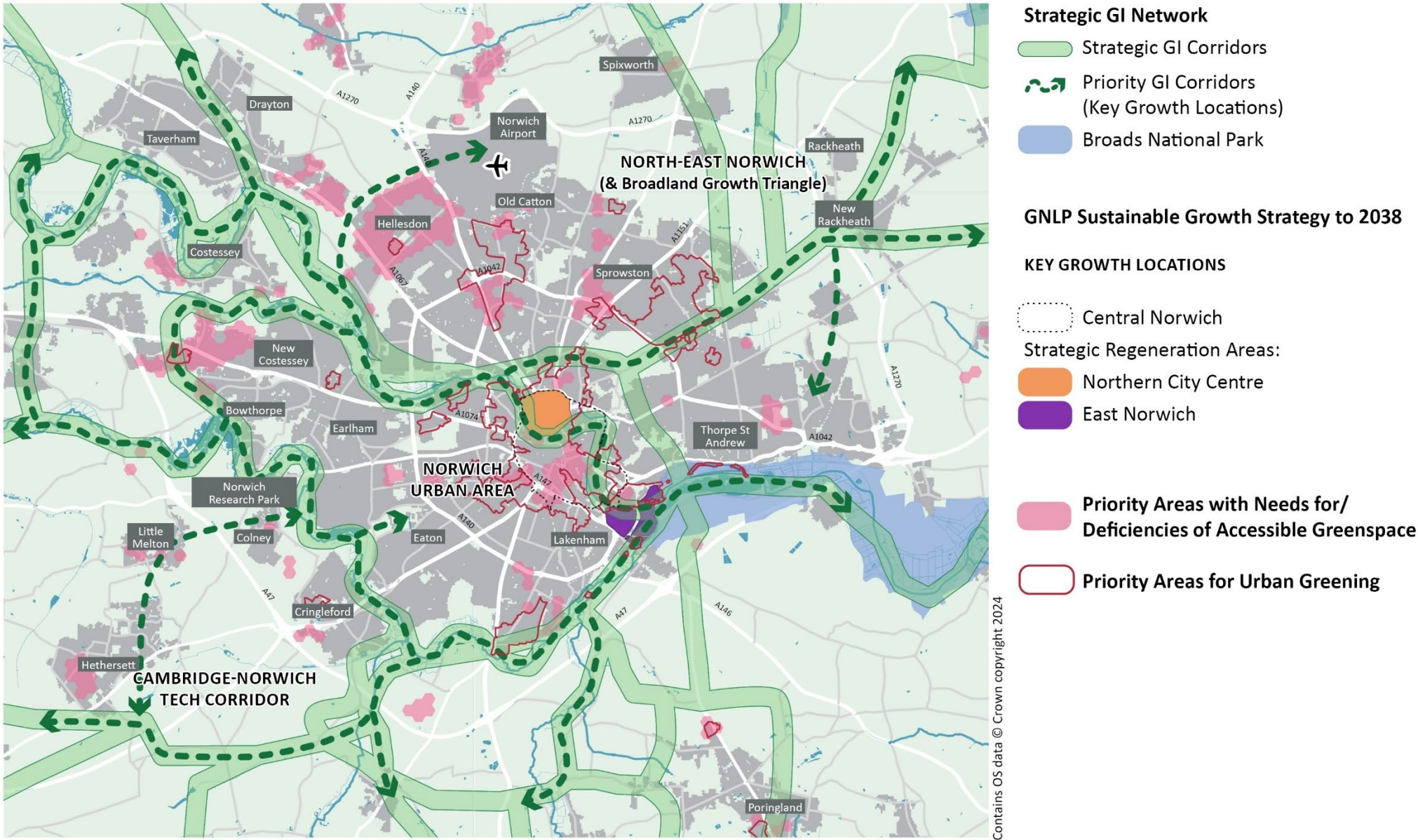
(Source – Greater Norwich Local Plan adopted March 2024)

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



Our strategic priorities and opportunities for GI

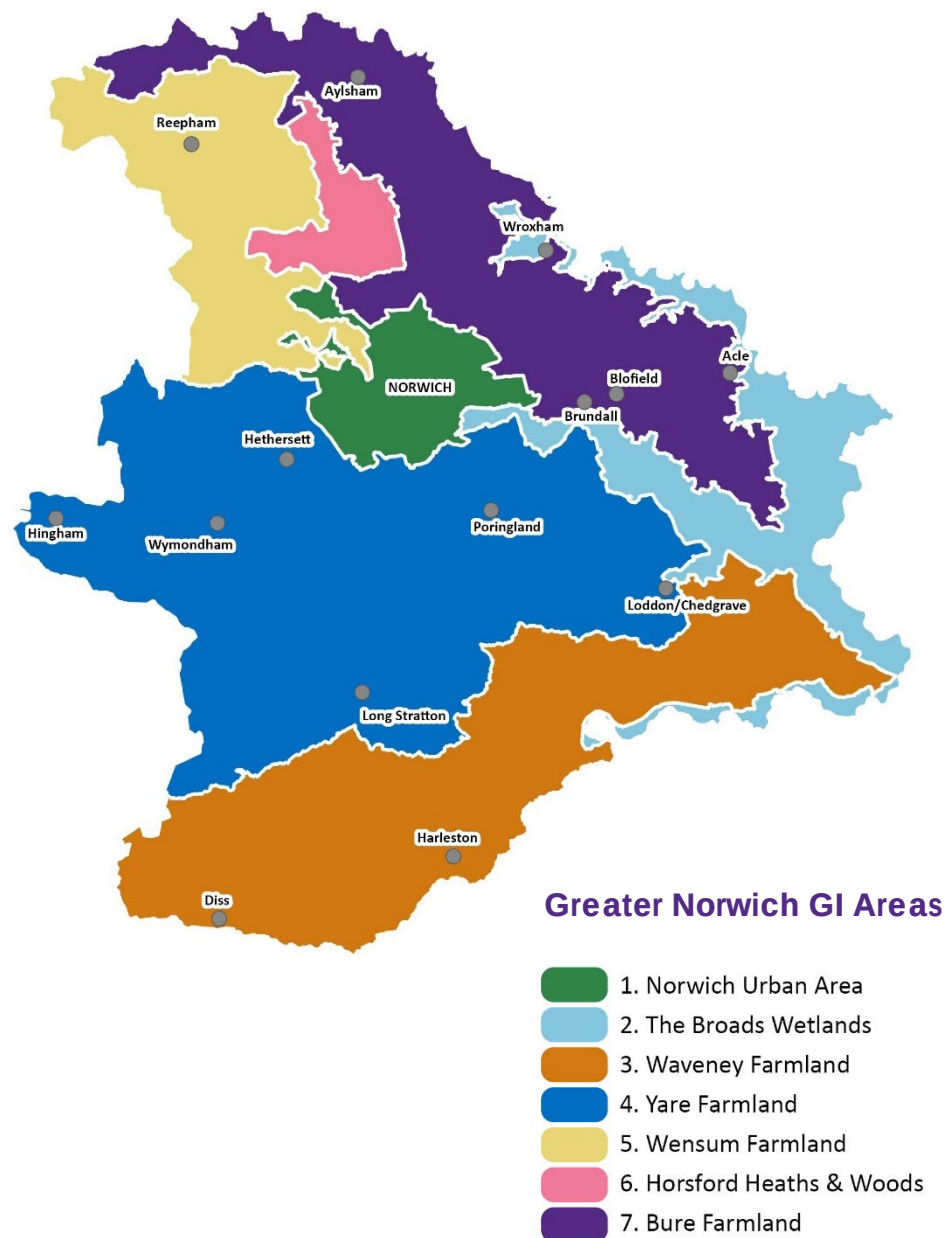
There has never been a more important time to act and harness the potential of GI to help address the challenges of climate change, restoring nature and improving health.

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



Contains OS data © Crown copyright 2024

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.



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's 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
• Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (forthcoming) • Norfolk Green Infrastructure & Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (2021)	• Greater Norwich Local Plan 2018-2038 (adopted 2024) • Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan (2024)	• 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
• 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)	• Greater Norwich Physical Activity & Sport Strategy 2022-27 • Greater Norwich Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (2021)	• 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)
• 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>	• 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>	• 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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Greater Norwich Growth Board

Green Infrastructure Strategy

Strategic Delivery Plan 2025-2030

Final V3 – April 2025



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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 Strategic Delivery Plan should be read in conjunction with the main Green Infrastructure Strategy and Story Map.

Accessibility Conformance Statement

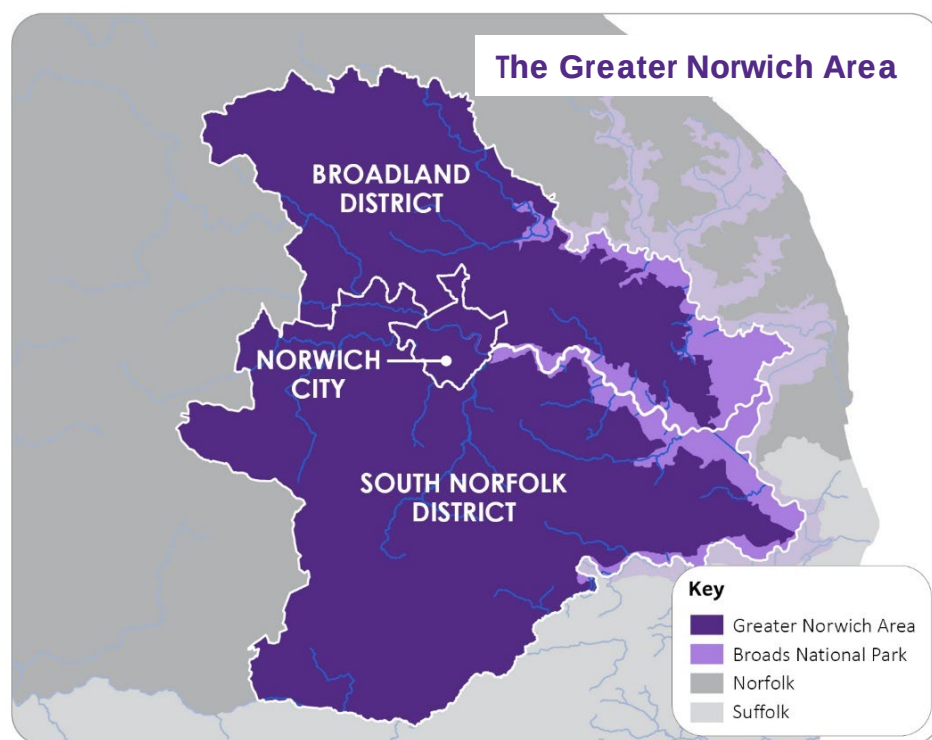
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¹ www.norfolk.gov.uk/article/44492/How-to-create-accessible-content

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 the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy to support the Local Plan. It outlines our overarching vision and strategic approach to protecting, enhancing and expanding GI across Greater Norwich to 2038.

‘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)

This Strategic Delivery Plan sets out our proposed programme for GI delivery over the next five years. Whilst it does not include specific projects, the programme identifies a range of strategic initiatives for protecting, enhancing and expanding GI, with a focus on nature recovery and enhancing access to nature.

We cannot deliver the GI 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 with local communities, particularly landowners and managers, to help deliver our shared vision and objectives for GI.

Drawing on our evidence and 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 (separate document).

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



Greater Norwich GI Areas

- 1. Norwich Urban Area
- 2. The Broads Wetlands
- 3. Waveney Farmland
- 4. Yare Farmland
- 5. Wensum Farmland
- 6. Horsford Heaths & Woods
- 7. Bure Farmland

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2. Delivery Programme

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 proposed **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 Strategic GI Initiatives focus on encouraging projects that will:

- Enhance access to nature, promote active travel and support adoption of healthy lifestyles and behaviours
- Support a network of bigger, better and more joined up habitats, provide nature-based solutions and protect our valuable wildlife sites

The high-level delivery programme set out in the following tables:

- Outlines **what** we will do and **where** (see **Map 2.1** and **Map 2.2**)
- Highlights the **GI objectives/outcomes** that the initiatives contribute to
- Indicates timescales for **when** they would be delivered and by **who**

The Other Strategic GI Initiatives set out in **Table 2.4** are not mapped due to their dispersed/thematic nature.

Delivery Programme - Key

GI Areas

1. Norwich Urban Area
2. The Broads Wetlands
3. Waveney Farmland
4. Yare Farmland
5. Wensum Farmland
6. Horsford Heaths & Woods
7. Bure Farmland

GI Objectives

1. Enabling access to nature and healthy lifestyles
2. Harnessing productive landscapes
3. Strengthening distinctive places
4. Supporting nature recovery
5. Promoting urban greening
6. Strengthening blue-green infrastructure

GI Outcomes

1. Healthier, happier and more active people
2. Nature-rich places
3. Climate-resilient places
4. Prosperous communities

Indicative Timescales

- Short-term (1-2 years)
- Medium-term (3-5 years)
- On-going (years 1-5)
- Longer term (5 years +)

Lead Delivery Organisations

- NCoC - Norfolk County Council
- NCC - Norwich City Council
- SNC - South Norfolk Council
- BDC - Broadland District Council

Proposed Strategic Green Infrastructure Initiatives

Table 2.1 – Strategic GI Corridors

What we will do	Where	Objectives	Outcomes	When	Who
Bure Valley Work to encourage projects that support enhancement of the Weaver’s Way in the Aylsham and Acle areas including access improvements, and creating new circular walks linked to the Norfolk Trails network in line with the priorities of the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan 2019–2029, improved connectivity and enhancement of habitats along the trail corridor and restoration of floodplain fen and wet woodland habitats in the Lower Bure Valley in line with the Broads Wetlands Initiative	Countryside & Rural Areas (Map 2.1) GI Areas: 2, 7	1, 4, 6	All	On-going	NCoC BDC
North-East Norwich to the Broads Work to encourage projects that support enhancement of the Strategic GI Corridor linking North-East Norwich with the Broads National Park around Acle including provision of accessible greenspace, public rights of way network improvements, restoration of heathland and woodland habitats, and improved connectivity of hedgerows and woodlands	Norwich Urban Area & Fringes (Map 2.2) Countryside & Rural Areas (Map 2.1) GI Areas: 1, 7	1, 3, 4	All	On-going	NCoC NCC BDC
Yare Valley Work to encourage projects that support enhancement of the Wherryman’s Way between Norwich and Burgh Castle including access improvements, and creating new circular walks linked to the Norfolk Trails network to align with the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan 2019–2029, restoration of floodplain fen habitats and improved habitat connectivity along the trail	Countryside & Rural Areas (Map 2.1) GI Areas: 2	1, 4, 6	All	On-going	NCoC NCC SNC
Waveney Valley Work to encourage projects that support enhancement of the Waveney Valley Strategic GI Corridor to the west and east of Diss linking to the Broads National Park, including access improvements to Angles Way and restoration of floodplain fen habitats	Countryside & Rural Areas (Map 2.1) GI Areas: 3	1, 3, 4, 6	1, 2, 4	Medium-term	NCoC SNC

What we will do	Where	Objectives	Outcomes	When	Who
South Norwich to the Waveney Valley Work to encourage projects that support enhancement of the Boudicca Way between Norwich and Diss including as access improvements and creating new circular walks linked to the Norfolk Trails network to align with the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan 2019–2029, and improved connectivity and enhancement of hedgerows and woodland habitats.	Countryside & Rural Areas (Map 2.1) GI Areas: 3, 4	1, 4	All	On-going	NCoC NCC SNC
South-West Norwich to Wymondham Work to encourage projects that support enhancement of the Strategic GI Corridor linking South-West Norwich with Wymondham including new and improved accessible greenspace, public rights of way network improvements and new greenways, pond restoration/creation, and expanding, strengthening and linking woodland, grassland and hedgerows	Norwich Urban Area & Fringes (Map 2.2) Countryside & Rural Areas (Map 2.1) GI Areas: 4	1, 3, 4, 6	All	On-going	NCoC SNC
Wensum Valley Work to encourage projects that support enhancement of the Wensum Way in the Lenwade area including access improvements and creating new circular walks linked to the Norfolk Trails network to align with the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan 2019–2029, restoration of floodplain fen habitats and expanding, strengthening and linking woodland to improve habitat connectivity along the river corridor west of Norwich	Countryside & Rural Areas (Map 2.1) GI Areas: 5	1, 3, 4, 6	All	On-going	NCoC NCC BDC
North-West Norwich to the Bure Valley Work to encourage projects that support enhancement of the Strategic GI Corridor linking North-West Norwich with the Bure Valley around Aylsham including provision of accessible greenspace, public rights of way network improvements, restoration of heathland and woodland habitats in the area north of Horsford and around Broadland Country Park, and improved connectivity of hedgerows and woodlands	Countryside & Rural Areas (Map 2.1) GI Areas: 6, 7	1, 3, 4	All	On-going	NCoC BDC
Norwich Wensum Urban Riverside Work to encourage projects that enhance the River Wensum corridor through Norwich City in line with the Wensum Strategy including increasing access and leisure opportunities (via the Green Loop), habitat connectivity improvements, historic environment enhancements, and facilitating partnership working to support regeneration of the river corridor and maximise benefits to the city.	Norwich Urban Area & Fringes (Map 2.2) GI Areas: 1	1, 3, 4, 5, 6	All	On-going	NCoC NCC

What we will do	Where	Objectives	Outcomes	When	Who
Southern Norwich Yare Valley Parkway Work to encourage projects that support development of a major linear park connecting a potential new country park at Bawburgh/Colney Lakes west of Norwich with Whitlingham Country Park to the east, including completion of the Yare Valley Walk and improved links to the city centre, as well as potential links to the Wensum Corridor in Norwich and to the west, and restoration of floodplain fen habitats and riparian woodland along the river corridor	Norwich Urban Area & Fringes (Map 2.2) GI Areas: 1, 2, 4	1, 3, 4, 6	All	On-going	NCoC NCC SNC
Northern Norwich Work to encourage projects that support creation of an east-west Strategic GI Corridor linking North-East Norwich with North-West Norwich - including provision of accessible greenspace, public rights of way network improvements and connections to footpaths/cycle paths along the A1270 Broadland Northway (aka Norwich Northern Distributor Road), restoration of woodland, grassland and heathland habitats, and improved connectivity of hedgerows and woodlands, and supporting opportunities for regenerative farming	Countryside & Rural Areas (Map 2.1) Norwich Urban Area & Fringes (Map 2.2) GI Areas: 7	1, 2, 3, 4	All	On-going	NCoC BDC
Green Loop Work to encourage projects that support delivery of, and connectivity to, the Green Loop – a major shared-use, off-road traffic-free greenway for walking and cycling, encompassing improvements to the Marriott's Way and Bure Valley Path, completion of the proposed Broadland Way, and improved connectivity and enhancement of linear hedgerows, grassland and woodland habitats along the trail corridor	Countryside & Rural Areas (Map 2.1) Norwich Urban Area & Fringes (Map 2.2) GI Areas: 1, 2, 5, 7	1, 4	All	Medium-term	NCoC NCC BDC
Norwich Green Grid Corridors Work to encourage projects that support enhancement of Green Grid Corridors within the densely built-up Norwich Urban Area, creating a strong and multifunctional green network connecting Norwich to the wider strategic GI network – through access improvements, including new/enhanced green spaces and waterside access, urban greening, food growing spaces, protecting and enhancing wildlife sites, and enhancing the City's landscape setting (including wooded valley sides and ridgelines in particular)	Norwich Urban Area & Fringes (Map 2.2) GI Areas: 1	All	All	On-going	NCC BDC

Table 2.2 – Strategic GI Sites

What we will do	Where	Objectives	Outcomes	When	Who
Potential New Country Parks Work to encourage projects for the creation of new country parks potentially located to the west of Norwich at Bawburgh/Colney Lakes, to the south east of Norwich in the Caistor St Edmund area (focused around High Ash Farm/Venta Icenorum Roman Settlement) and to the north-east of Norwich. These new county parks would provide additional larger-scale accessible greenspace to meet the needs of a growing population. They would also provide Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace to address recreational impacts from visitor pressures of new development on wildlife sites protected under the Habitat Regulations in line with the Norfolk Green Infrastructure & Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy.	Norwich Urban Area & Fringes (Map 2.2) GI Areas: 4, 5, 7	1, 3, 4	All	On-going	NCoC SNC BDC
Expanded/Enhanced Existing Country Parks Work to encourage projects for the expansion/enhancement of Ladybelt Country Park (in East Carleton south west of Norwich), Whitlingham Country Park (east of Norwich in the Broads National Park) and Broadland Country Park (north of Norwich near Horsford). This would maintain the provision of high-quality accessible greenspace to meet the needs of a growing population, and also contribute to the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace.	Norwich Urban Area & Fringes (Map 2.2) Countryside & Rural Areas (Map 2.1) GI Areas: 2, 4, 6	1, 3, 4	All	On-going	NCoC SNC BDC
Blue Spaces Work to encourage projects for the creation and enhancement of blue spaces, such as the restoration of gravel pits within river valleys to provide nature-rich wetland habitats and opportunities for access and water-focused leisure activities	Countryside & Rural Areas (Map 2.1) GI Areas: 3, 4, 7	1, 3, 4, 6	All	Longer-term	NCoC SNC BDC

Table 2.3 – Strategic GI Zones

What we will do	Where	Objectives	Outcomes	When	Who
Strategic Gaps Work to encourage projects that enhance, expand and connect GI within the Wymondham-Hethersett and Hethersett-Cringleford strategic gaps designated in the South Norfolk Local Plan to strengthen their function as multi-functional “green buffers” that provide access to nature and habitat improvements; and work to review the need for additional strategic gaps in other growth locations within Broadland District.	Countryside & Rural Areas (Map 2.1) Norwich Urban Area & Fringes (Map 2.2) GI Areas: 4, 5, 7	1, 3, 4	All	Medium-term	NCoC SNC BDC
Nature Recovery Work in partnership with the Norfolk & Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership to encourage projects that support the aims of the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy and its priorities for landscape-scale and urban nature recovery, and delivery of wider environmental benefits (including recreation, landscape character, geodiversity, soil quality, water quality, flood risk management, pollination and carbon storage) alongside food production, <u>agroforestry</u> and eco-tourism. Within Greater Norwich, it is proposed that nature recovery priorities for action would be targeted within the following opportunity zones²: • Broadland Farmlands: maintain, enhance, restore and connect priority habitats including woodlands, areas of remnant heathland, and the nationally/ internationally important Norfolk Valley Fens and chalk river systems (including the Wensum) to connect fragmented sites³ • South Norfolk Farmlands: conserve and enhance the area’s ancient semi-natural woodlands, copses, river valley plantations and ancient boundaries (hedgerows/hedgerow trees), arable plateau field margins and pastoral river valley corridors, flood plain fens and riparian habitats⁴	Countryside & Rural Areas (Map 2.1) GI Areas: All	All	All	On-going	NCoC NCC SNC BDC

²Zones reflect Strategic Environmental Opportunities highlighted by Natural England’s National Character Areas (NCAs)

³NCA 84: Mid Norfolk & NCA 78: Central North Norfolk

⁴NCA 83: South Norfolk & High Suffolk Claylands

What we will do	Where	Objectives	Outcomes	When	Who
The Broads Wetlands: conserve and enhance the distinctive cultural landscape of the Broads' wetlands through securing and expanding open water, riverine and estuarine habitats, and managing water quality and availability⁵; and working with Natural England to deliver habitat restoration and management, appropriate public access and education, research and monitoring for National Nature Reserves Norwich Urban Area: maintain, enhance, restore and connect priority habitats within the Norwich Urban Area – including urban woodlands, grasslands, areas of remnant heathland (such as Mousehold Heath) and flood plain/riparian habitats (including the River Wensum) to connect fragmented sites – in support of the Norwich Wensum Urban Riverside and Norwich Green Grid Corridors Strategic Initiatives (see Table 2.1)					
Urban Greening Work to encourage projects in the Norwich Urban Area, and the main towns of Diss, Long Stratton, Wymondham and Aylsham in particular, where the need for increasing green cover in open spaces, woodlands, streets, squares and on roofs/walls of buildings within the built environment is greatest - to support urban nature recovery and delivery of wider environmental goals in line with the aims of the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and to provide community food growing spaces.	Norwich Urban Area & Fringes (Map 2.2) Countryside & Rural Areas (Map 2.1) GI Areas: 1, 3, 4, 7	All	All	On-going	NCoC NCC SNC BDC

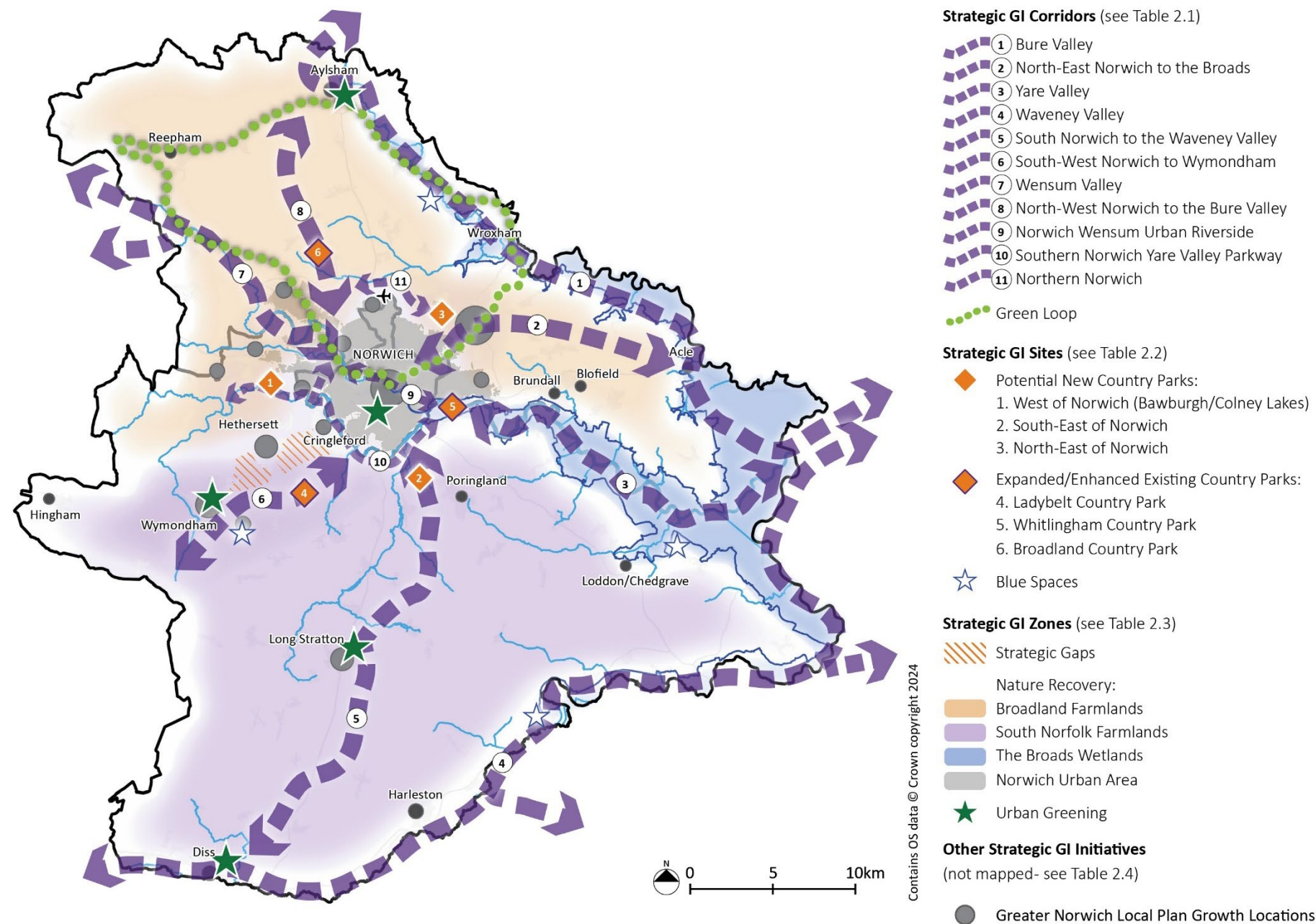
⁵NCA 80: The Broads

Table 2.4 – Other Strategic GI Initiatives

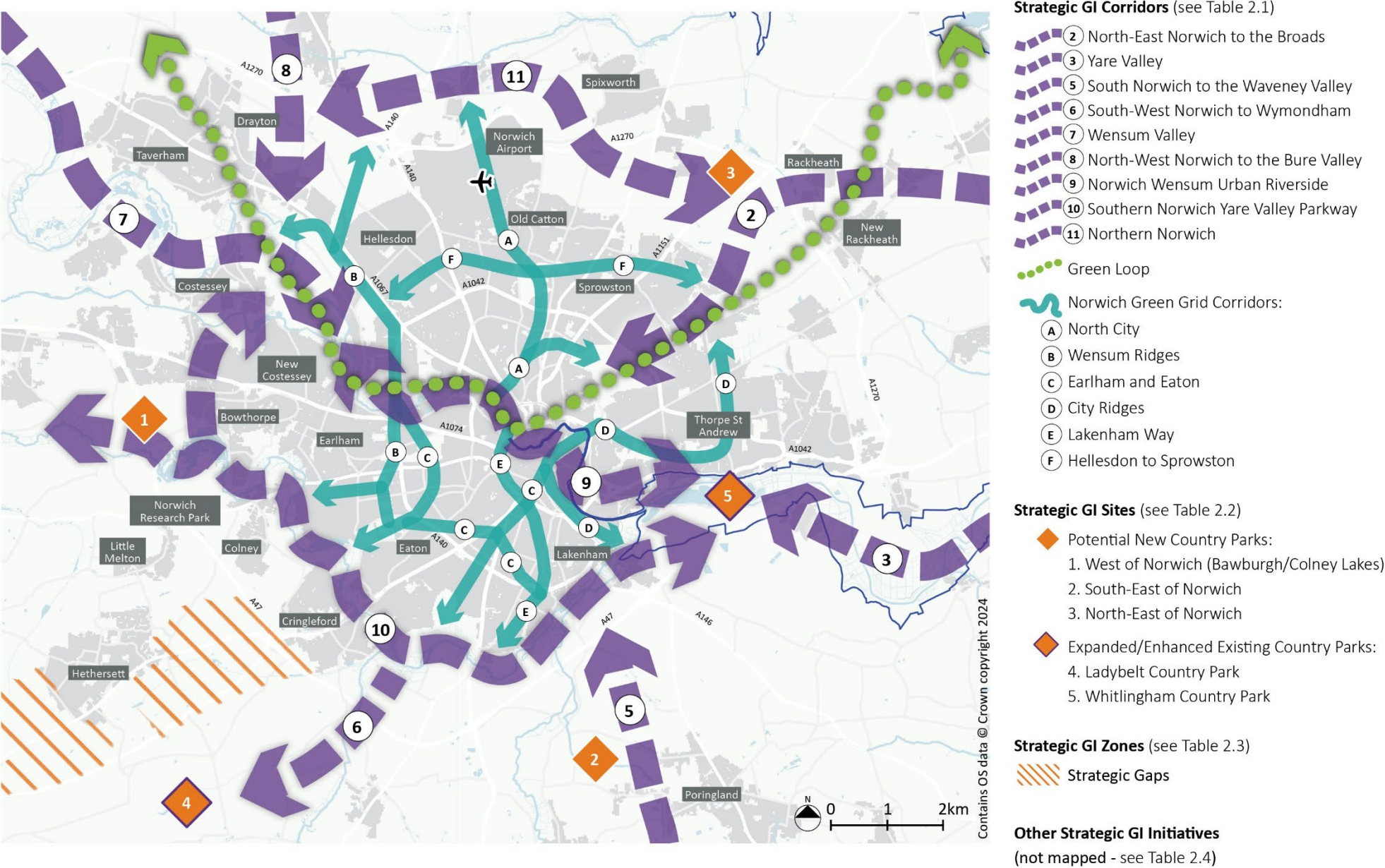
What we will do	Where	Objectives	Outcomes	When	Who
Active Travel Routes Work to encourage projects that support development of other greenways for walking and cycling across the Strategic Growth Area such as the Wensum Riverside Walk and network of designated pedalways in Norwich in line with the Norfolk Walking, Wheeling & Cycling Strategy (2024)	Greater Norwich-wide GI Areas: All	1, 3	All	Short-term	NCoC NCC SNC BDC
Connected Greenspaces Work to encourage projects that support enhancement of, and improved access and connectivity to, green and blue spaces, and provide new green space provision; this work will focus on the Priority Areas for Accessible Green Space, particularly in and around the key growth locations.	Greater Norwich-wide GI Areas: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	All	All	On-going	NCoC NCC SNC BDC
Countryside Access Work in partnership with the Norfolk Local Access Forum to encourage projects for improving public rights of way connecting rural and urban communities with countryside destinations across the Greater Norwich Area to align with the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan 2019–2029	Greater Norwich-wide GI Areas: All	1, 3	1, 3, 4	On-going	NCoC
Inclusive Green Spaces Work to encourage projects that help ensure our accessible green spaces and routes are socially inclusive, safe and well-managed as possible, in order to provide a welcoming environment for all residents and visitors in line with the “active environments” priorities of the Greater Norwich Physical Activity & Sport Strategy 2022-2027 (to include clear signage, appropriately-lit car parks, walkways and facilities for people with disabilities)	Greater Norwich-wide GI Areas: All	1, 3	1, 4	On-going	NCoC NCC SNC BDC
Access to Nature and Wellbeing Work to encourage projects that provide opportunities for people to connect with and experience nature in green spaces by using the NHS Green Social Prescribing Tool as a health improvement tool	Greater Norwich-wide GI Areas: All	1, 3	1, 4	On-going	NCoC NCC SNC BDC
Community Food Growing Work to encourage projects that support establishment of a local food production system for Greater Norwich that supports community food growing activities in community gardens/orchards, allotments and urban farms, and strengthens links to the local agricultural sector	Greater Norwich-wide GI Areas: All	1, 2	1, 2, 4	Medium-term	NCoC NCC SNC BDC

What we will do	Where	Objectives	Outcomes	When	Who
Volunteering and Learning Work to encourage projects that provide opportunities for volunteering linked to the use, conservation/stewardship and improvement of green spaces and other GI features, and support outdoor/environmental education and skills development opportunities	Greater Norwich-wide GI Areas: All	1, 3, 4, 5	1, 2, 4	On-going	NCoC NCC SNC BDC
Urban Tree Canopy Cover Work to encourage projects for expanding tree canopy cover in urban areas in support of urban nature recovery and wider environmental goals	Greater Norwich-wide GI Areas: 1, 4, 5, 7	1, 3, 4, 5, 6	All	On-going	NCoC NCC SNC BDC
Local Nature Reserves Work to encourage projects for developing new Local Nature Reserves within Broadland District in particular, to provide increased informal recreation opportunities for people to connect with and experience nature on their doorsteps	Greater Norwich-wide GI Areas: All	1, 3, 4	1, 2, 4	Medium-term	BDC
Local Wildlife Sites Work in partnership with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust to review existing County Wildlife Sites and designate new County Wildlife Sites where appropriate, to protect locally valuable wildlife sites throughout Greater Norwich	Greater Norwich-wide GI Areas: All	4	2	Medium-term	NCoC
Biodiversity Net Gain Work in partnership with the Norfolk & Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership to encourage projects that support delivery of off-site Biodiversity Net Gain developer contributions in priority areas for habitat creation and restoration that are identified by the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Greater Norwich-wide GI Areas: All	4	2	On-going	NCoC NCC SNC BDC
Nutrient Neutrality Work to encourage projects for provision of appropriate nutrient neutrality mitigation measures to address potential water pollution impacts from development affecting wildlife sites protected under the Habitat Regulations	Greater Norwich-wide GI Areas: All	4, 6	2	On-going	NCoC NCC SNC BDC
Water Resource Management Work in partnership with the Broadland Catchment Partnership to encourage projects that support the Broadland Rivers Catchment Plan's catchment-based approach to tackling water resource management issues through promoting: sustainable water use, thriving rivers and healthy floodplain/riverine wildlife habitats and natural flood management solutions.	Greater Norwich-wide GI Areas: All	4, 6	2, 3	On-going	NCoC NCC SNC BDC

Map 2.1 – Greater Norwich Proposed Strategic GI Initiatives



Map 2.2 – Norwich Urban Area & Fringes Proposed Strategic GI Initiatives



3. Implementation

Implementation and monitoring of the GI Strategy and Strategic Delivery Plan will be led by the Green Infrastructure Programme Team (GIPT), a well-established cross authority officer group.

Together they will develop a pipeline of projects, with delivery updates reported in subsequent publications of the annual Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan.

This team took on the role of GI Delivery Group during the development of the GI Strategy, working with the Steering Group and Consultant team.

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

The GIPT will seek to encourage other local stakeholders to become delivery partners in support of relevant strategic initiatives, such as: Natural England, the Environment Agency, the RSPB, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Rivers Trusts, Sustrans, the National Trust, Anglia Water, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group, for example.



View from Kett's Heights, Norwich © Fisheye Images

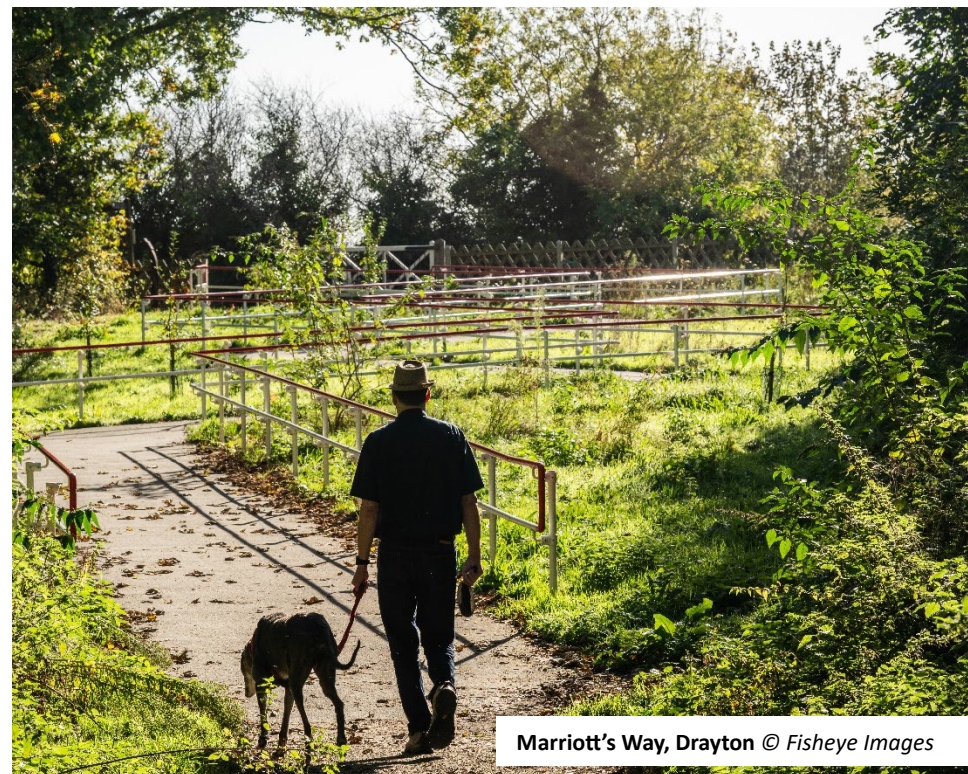
Our approach to GI project prioritisation and delivery

In developing this Strategy, a number of strategic priorities and initiatives for GI have emerged that will be taken forward through implementation of our delivery programme

The strategic opportunities for enhancing and expanding the GI network highlighted in the GI Area Profiles can be used, together with the interactive GI opportunity mapping available on the online Greater Norwich GI Story Map, to inform the targeting, prioritisation and selection of GI projects.

In order to prioritise projects at the strategic and local scale, the project partners will develop an approach to assist with the prioritisation of GI projects to be taken forward for development, funding and delivery. Consideration will be given to:

- How the project supports delivery of the GI Strategy objectives and outcomes (having regard to the GI opportunity mapping)
- The relevance of the project to supporting delivery of national and local priorities for tackling climate change, restoring nature and improving health, and also enabling sustainable growth
- The level of stakeholder engagement and support for the project
- The project's eligibility for available funding opportunities



A live database will be produced and maintained, containing details of current and proposed GI project development and implementation activity across Greater Norwich, at both strategic and local levels.

An example template GI Project Assessment Form is included as **Appendix 1**, which can be used to capture and assess projects that are in development.

Our approach to monitoring delivery

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

We will monitor GI delivery against the natural environment indicators for Policy 3 (Environmental Protection & Enhancement) from the Greater Norwich Local Plan Monitoring Framework. These are:

- Designated Natural Assets (EPE4)
- Biodiversity Net Gain (EPE5)
- Green Infrastructure (EPE6)
- Visitor Pressure (EPE7)
- Condition of Protected Habitats/Nutrient Neutrality (EPE)

Consideration will be given to developing additional indicators to inform the monitoring of the proposed GI targets that support delivery of the Strategy's objectives, e.g.:

- Urban Tree Canopy Cover
- Accessible Greenspace
- Local Nature Reserves
- Greenways
- Allotments and Community Food Growing Spaces

The monitoring framework for any additional indicators would include details of relevant data sources/frequency, targets and baseline where relevant, triggers for action and actions.

Quantitative and qualitative changes to GI assets can be measured against the baseline data set out in the GI evidence reports (available for download from the online GI Strategy Story Map).



Earlham Park, Norwich © Fisheye Images



Whitlingham Broad in the Broads National Park © Fisheye Images

Appendix 1 – Example GI Project Assessment Form

1. Proposed Programme/Project Name	<i>May be a programme that includes projects or a project that is part of a programme</i>
2. Strategic GI Initiative	<i>Name of the relevant Strategic GI Initiative from the Greater Norwich GI Strategy</i>
3. GI Area(s)	<i>Name of the relevant GI Area(s) from the Greater Norwich GI Strategy</i>
4. District(s)	<i>Name of the relevant District (Broadland, South Norfolk or Norwich City)</i>
5. Lead Organisation	<i>Name of organisation/body submitting the form.</i>
6. Delivery Partners	<i>Name partner organisations currently engaged</i>

7. Assessment Criteria
6.1 Supporting delivery of the Greater Norwich GI Strategy's Objectives & Outcomes <i>Tick the objective(s) that apply and indicate what the project will deliver (e.g. Supporting nature recovery – type/area of habitat (Ha) that will be created) and explain how this will contribute to the following outcomes: (1. Healthier, happier and more active people; 2. Nature-rich places; 3. Climate-resilient places; 4. Prosperous communities).</i>

GI Objectives	Tick	What will the project deliver?
1 Enabling access to nature and healthy lifestyles	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
2 Harnessing productive landscapes	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
3 Strengthening distinctive places	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
4 Supporting nature recovery	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
5 Promoting urban greening	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
6 Strengthening blue-green infrastructure	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>

6.2 Describe the way in which the project aligns with local policy and strategy

(e.g. Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Greater Norwich Local Plan, Greater Norwich Physical Activity & Sport Strategy, Climate Change Strategy & Action Plans/Climate & Ecological Emergency Action Plans, Greater Norwich Local Transport Plan, Corporate Strategies, etc)

Reference strategies and relevant policies, targets and ambitions.

6.3 Describe how stakeholders (including community groups) have been involved in developing this project. What engagement has taken place to date and what level of financial/other support has been secured?

Reference consultation, community support and need for this project.

6.4 Describe the project timescales and phasing

Describe project phases and state if part of longer-term project (e.g. being phased to fit with funding/partner timescales, or part of a wider programme).

6.5 Funding

Provide an overview of funding considerations that may influence prioritisation

i) Dependency: is the project dependent on other work/funding? If yes, explain and give details.

TBC

ii) Deliverability: What other funding has been secured and how can you demonstrate partner commitment?

Provider	Value	Financial year to be spent
<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>

iii) Describe how this project could be scaled up further, if further funding secured?

TBC

7 Project Costs

Provide summary only (this is not an application form for funding so detail is not required)

Cost	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Development costs	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
Implementation costs	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>
Total	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>	<i>TBC</i>

8 Describe how this project would be managed and monitored on completion

Describe who would be the responsible body(s) for managing the project on completion and long-term revenue funding and stewardship arrangements.

Describe any key milestones/targets that would be monitored and reported and to whom.

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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Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy Green Infrastructure Area Profiles

for

**Greater Norwich
Growth Board**

by



Final V2 – January 2025



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

Introduction

Purpose

This evidence document identifies spatial priorities and opportunities for enhancing and expanding the Strategic Green Infrastructure (GI) Network across Greater Norwich to inform the GI Strategy and Strategic Delivery Plan.

In addition to the GI Strategy and Strategic Delivery Plan documents, it should be read in conjunction with the supporting evidence reports and the interactive mapping on the Story Map.

This high-level assessment primarily draws on the evidence reports as listed in **Appendix 2** of the GI Strategy document. It also was informed by other key sources of evidence highlighted throughout the document, including Natural England National Character Areas and local landscape character assessments within Greater Norwich.

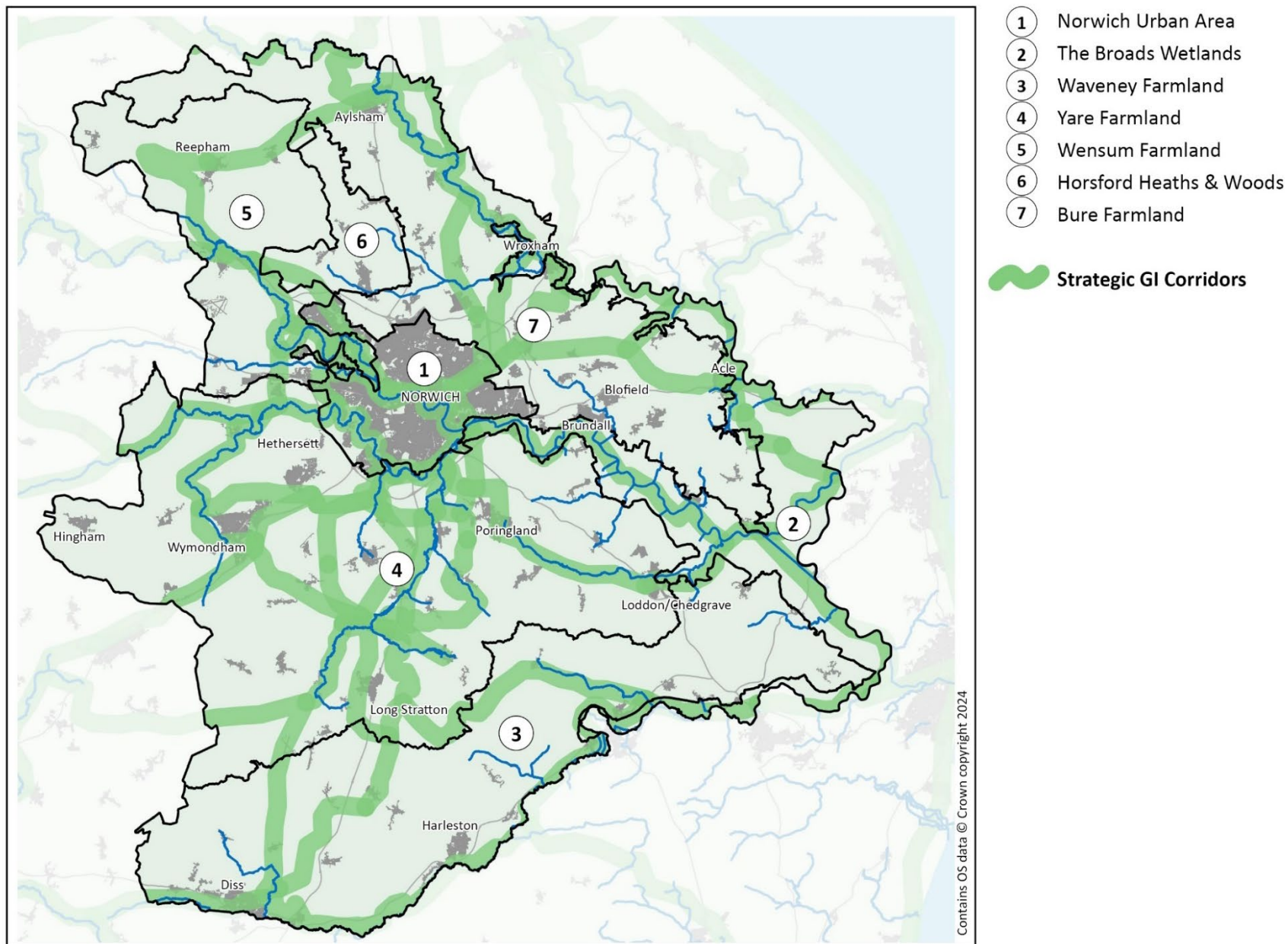
GI Areas

For the purposes of the GI Strategy, “GI Areas” have been defined to provide a framework for this assessment (**Map A1.1**).

These reflect areas of broadly similar landscape character, habitats and other GI assets such as river catchments defined at the Greater Norwich scale.

A location plan showing the boundaries of each GI Area in relation to the Strategic GI Corridors shown on **Map A1.1** is provided.

Map A1.1 Greater Norwich GI Areas



Identifying Strategic GI Priorities and Opportunities

Strategic priorities and opportunities for enhancing and expanding the GI network across Greater Norwich have been identified for each GI Area, focussed on the Strategic GI Corridors² shown on **Map A1.1**.

These existing and proposed Strategic GI Corridors form the backbone of our proposed Strategic GI Network. They provide a focus for delivery of enhanced and new GI provision throughout Greater Norwich, including in the key locations for growth identified by the Greater Norwich Local Plan (adopted 2024).

Opportunities are highlighted for strengthening the connectivity of urban and rural communities/countryside destinations (active places for people) and habitats (natural places for nature) within each GI Area.

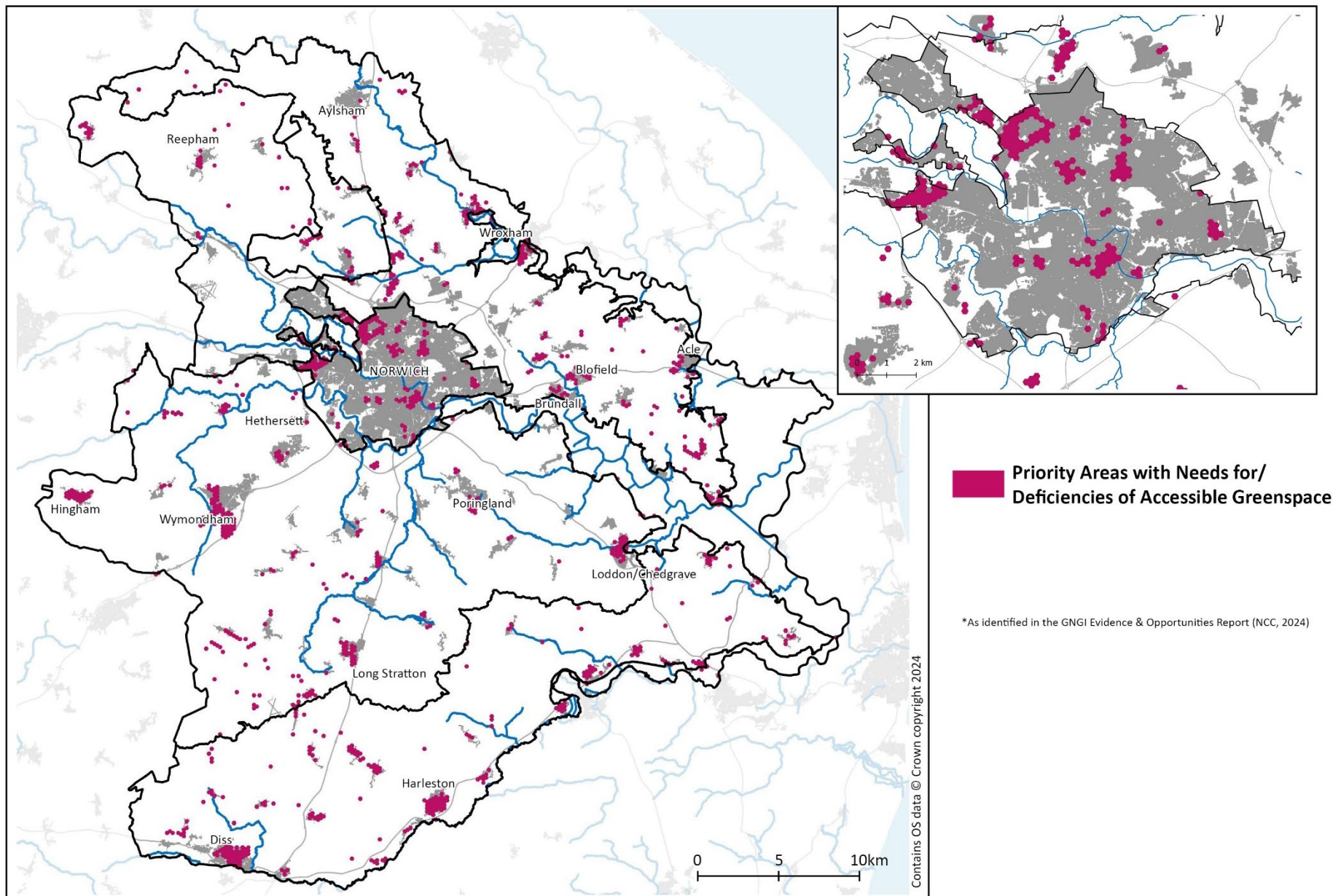
The strategic priorities and opportunities reflect the findings of the GI Evidence & Opportunities Report (NCoC, 2024) with respect to recommended priority areas for accessible greenspace (see **Map A1.2**) and urban greening (see **Map A1.3**) to address identified needs and deficiencies. The priority areas for accessible greenspace are locations with the greatest demand for and deficiencies in accessible greenspace.

The assessment also reflects relevant Strategic Environmental Opportunities identified by the Natural England National Character Areas within Greater Norwich (see **Map A1.4**).

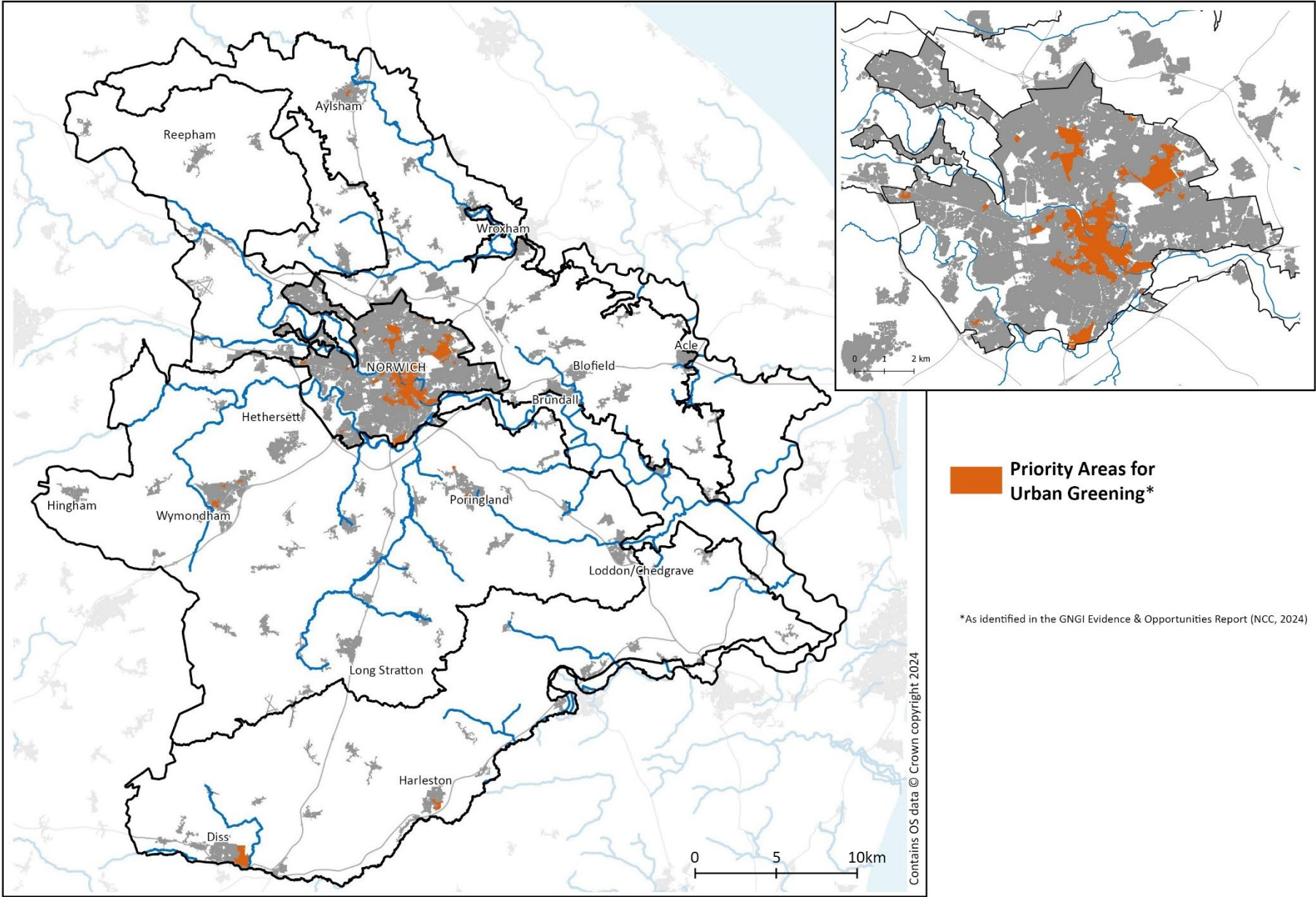
The strategic priorities and opportunities for GI should be considered alongside the priority areas for habitat creation and restoration within the Greater Norwich Area identified in the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

² Source – Norfolk GI Network Mapping supporting the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework

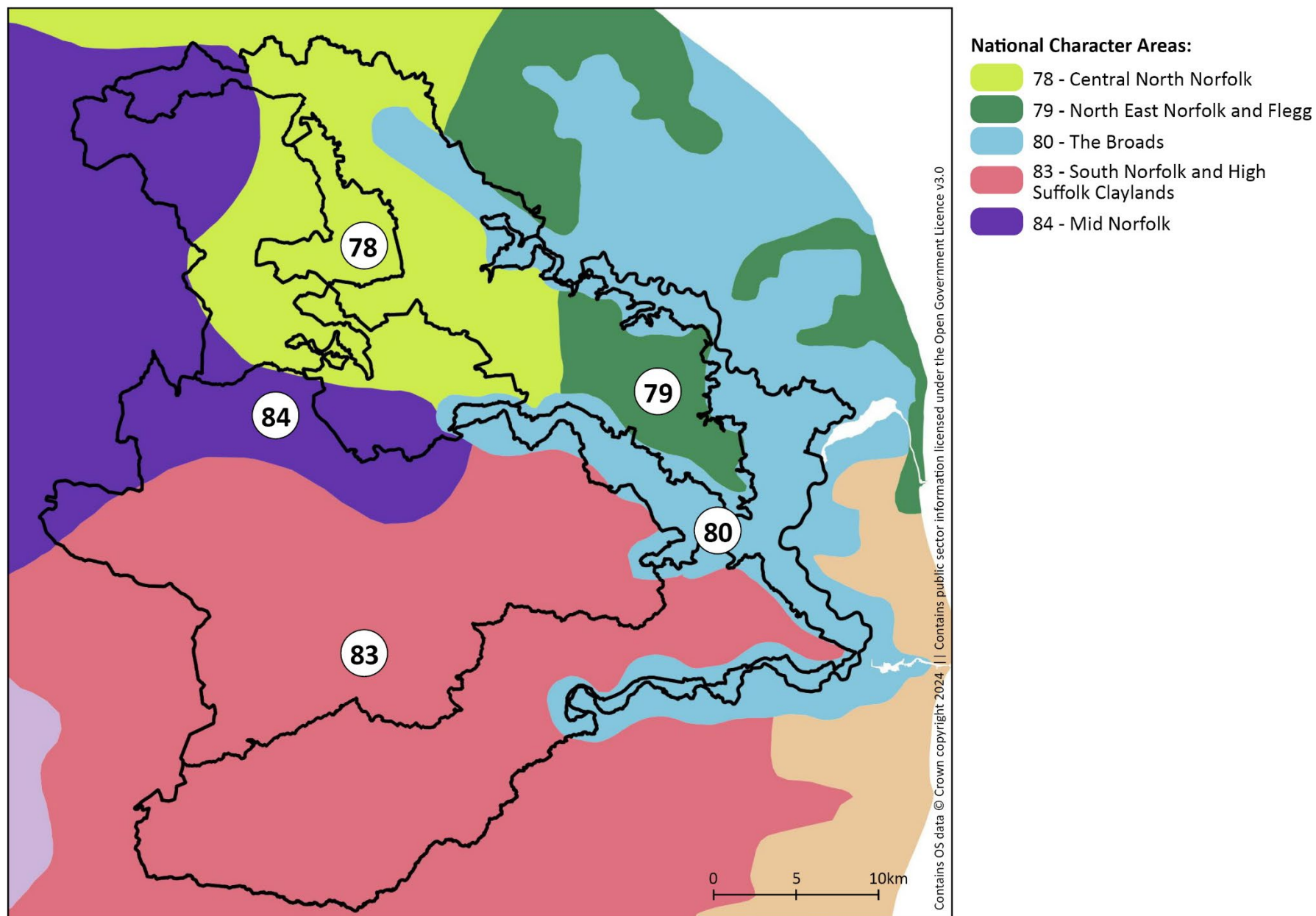
Map A1.2 Priority Areas for Accessible Greenspace



Map A1.3 Priority Areas for Urban Greening



Map A1.4 National Character Areas



Existing Strategic GI Assets

To provide context for the identified strategic priorities and opportunities, an overview of existing strategic GI assets within each GI Area is provided.

This includes:

- Recreational and healthy living GI assets
- Ecological and geological GI assets
- Hydrological (water) GI assets
- Heritage/cultural GI assets

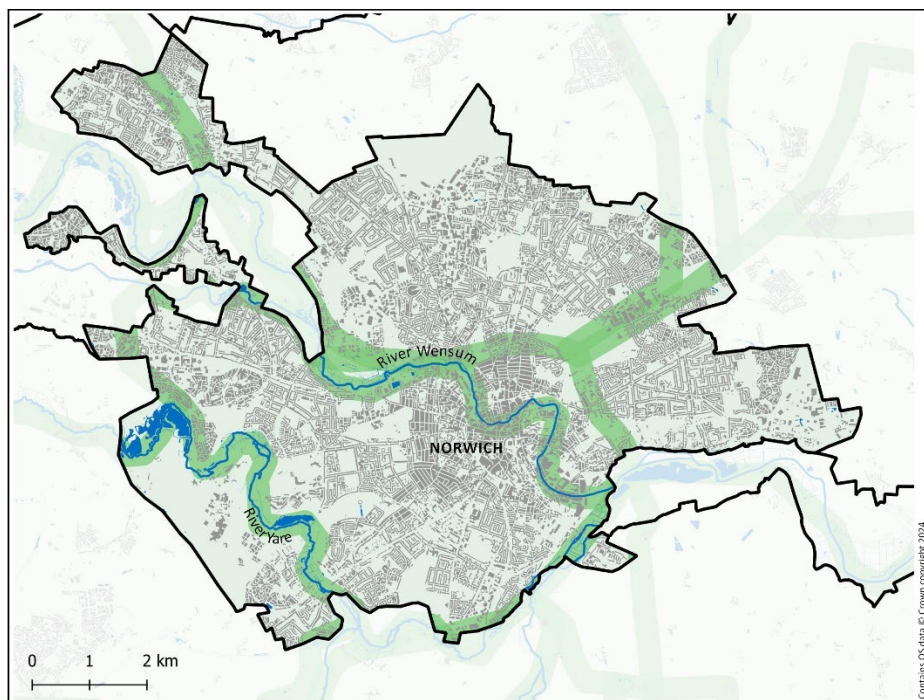
Landscape Character Context

To provide context for the strategic GI assets within each GI Area, a summary overview of the area's current landscape character is also provided.

Area 1 – Norwich Urban Area

Location

This GI Area comprises the contiguous urban area within the City of Norwich extending into Broadland District and South Norfolk.



Strategic priorities and opportunities for enhancing and expanding the Strategic GI Corridors, and other GI features, both within and around the fringes of the Norwich Urban Area are identified.

This profile should be read in conjunction with adjoining Areas 2 (The Broads Wetlands), 4 (Yare Farmland), 5 (Wensum Farmland), 6 (Horsford Heaths & Woods) and 7 (Bure Farmland) where applicable.

Strategic GI Priorities

- Enhance the quality of parks and green spaces in line with the Norwich Parks & Green Spaces Strategy
- Address deficiencies in accessible greenspace provision at a range of scales within the identified priority areas
- Strengthen the network of urban greenways to support active travel
- Address health inequalities for urban communities, particularly in areas experiencing high levels of deprivation
- Urban greening to increase green cover in the built environment, strengthen habitat connectivity along Green Grid Corridors and support urban nature recovery
- Embed appropriate GI into the Northern City Centre and East Norwich Strategic Regeneration Areas



Strategic GI Opportunities

Active Places

- Target new **accessible greenspace** at a range of scales in priority areas with identified deficiencies in provision (see **Map A1.2**) to offer opportunities for people in these areas to access greenspace for informal/formal recreation and experience nature close to where they live.
- Explore opportunities for enhancing and expanding a network of **urban greenways** providing off-road, traffic free active travel routes for walking and cycling - connecting places where people live, work and learn to green spaces, and integrating with the public transport network. For example, opportunities for greenway improvements along the River Yare and River Wensum.
- Explore opportunities for enhancing and expanding the provision of accessible green spaces to support **healthy lifestyles** in line with the Norwich Parks & Green Spaces Strategy - such as urban parks and gardens, nature reserves, allotments and other community food growing spaces - either through provision of new spaces, or enhancing/repurposing existing spaces, for informal/formal recreation activities, conservation volunteering (to support long-term stewardship) and food growing within urban areas.

Natural Places

- Target increasing the level of green cover within the built environment in priority areas for **urban greening** within the Norwich Urban Area (see **Map A1.3**) - such as opportunities for new and/or enhanced provision of urban open spaces, woodlands, streets, squares and green roofs/walls on buildings - to strengthen habitat connectivity and support urban nature recovery.
- Target habitat creation to increase existing capacity for supplying multiple **ecosystem service benefits** in identified areas of greatest demand for these services within the Norwich Urban Area informed by the Norwich Biodiversity Baseline Study. For example, expanding the urban tree canopy to support carbon storage/sequestration, regulation of air/noise pollution and to regulate the local climate; and creating new habitat for reducing surface water runoff to reduce flood risk and regulate water quality – particularly along Green Grid Corridors.
- Explore opportunities to create, enhance and restore priority habitats in and around the Norwich Urban Area, and strengthen **ecological connectivity** to the surrounding countryside, in line with the priorities identified by the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy. For example, this may include opportunities for buffering and extending woodland around Lion Wood in east Norwich, and opportunities for small-scale wetland creation along the River Yare.
- Explore opportunities to regenerate and enhance existing GI assets, and embed new GI features such as green roofs, sustainable drainage systems and street trees, into the Northern City Centre and East Norwich **Strategic Regeneration Areas** to support urban greening.

Existing Strategic GI Assets

Recreational and healthy living GI assets

- **Walking and cycling routes** include, for example – Marriott's Way, a footpath, bridleway, and cycle route that runs between Aylsham and Norwich. Part of Marriott's Way also follows National Cycle Network Route 1, which runs northwest-southeast through the centre of Norwich. The Wherryman's Way and Boudicca Way both begin in the southeast of Norwich at the station, heading east and south respectively. Norwich also has a network of active travel routes which are locally known as Pedalways.
- **Recreational areas** include, for example golf courses such as Eaton Golf Course; and Local Nature Reserves, for example Mousehold Heath and Earlham Park Woods; and the Sweet Briar Marshes Wildlife Trust Site (which has a developing network of accessible paths).
- **Parks and green spaces** include a variety of spaces with various functions ranging from large city parks, to smaller amenity spaces, allotments, and religious grounds. Examples include Wensum Park, Chapelfield Gardens, Castle Gardens, Waterloo Park and Mousehold South Allotment.



Sweet Briar Marshes. © Rachel Murray

Ecological and geological GI assets

- **Designated sites** include 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) 8 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) - for example Sweetbriar Road Meadows SSSI, Danby Wood LNR, Lion Wood LNR and Bowthorpe Marsh LNR. The Norwich Urban Area also includes more than 40 County Wildlife Sites, such as County Hall Woods and Pinebanks.
- **Key habitats** include, for example deciduous woodland in pockets throughout the Norwich Urban Area, lowland heathland at Mousehold Heath; and lowland meadows, good quality semi-improved grassland and floodplain grazing marsh along the River Wensum and River Yare corridors.
- **Geological features** include, for example St. James' Pit SSSI, known for its Upper Cretaceous mosasaur (large marine reptile) fossil remains.



Hydrological (water) GI assets

- **Operational catchments** – The majority of the Norwich Urban Area lies in the Yare Operational Catchment. The northwest, around Taverham lies in the Wensum Catchment, and the northeast, covering part of Sprowston is in the Bure Catchment.
- **Key waterways and features** include – the River Wensum, which flows broadly west-east through the centre of the City, and the River Yare, which flows around the south of Norwich.

Further information can be found in the [Broadland Rivers Catchment Management Plan](#).



Heritage/cultural GI assets

- **Conservation areas** – 22 No. including for example Thorpe St. Andrews (Broadland District), Cringleford (South Norfolk District) and Norwich City Centre.
- **Important historic buildings** - in the Norwich Urban area, there are over 1,100 Statutory Listed Buildings (Grade I, II* and II) both within and outside of Conservation Areas. These include for example the grade I listed Cathedral and Guildhall. In addition, there are also a large number of non-statutory 'Locally Listed' buildings. The majority of these are in the City centre.
- **Industrial heritage features** representing the breadth of the City's rich industrial heritage. This ranges from heavy engineering, manufacturing aircraft, making mustard, chocolate, Christmas crackers and the textile and shoe industries.
- **Registered historic parks and gardens** – 13 No. including for example Waterloo Park and The Rosary Cemetery (grade II* listed) and Wensum Park and the Plantation Garden (grade II listed)
- **Scheduled monuments** – 29 No. illustrating the breadth of Norwich's history, including for example Norwich Castle, the City Walls and Towers, bridges, gates and sites/remains of historic buildings such as chapels and priories.

Landscape Character Context

The Norwich Urban Area has a diverse character with a historic central area, extensive areas of open space, historic parks and gardens, wildlife sites, river valleys and wooded ridges.

Natural environment assets such as the valleys of the rivers Wensum and Yare and local nature reserves, and historic parks, gardens and other open spaces, all add to the sense of place and character of the Area. Trees in particular enhance the structure and layout of the townscape, many providing important landmarks. Described as ‘a city in an orchard’ in the C18th, Norwich continues to enjoy a well-wooded landscape setting with over 200 acres of publicly-owned woodland within the city boundary and extensive semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and heathland at Mousehold Heath. The wooded escarpments created by the river valleys are particularly important to the setting of the city.

Outside of the city centre, the Area is predominantly suburban in character with a variety of low-density neighbourhoods created as Norwich has grown beyond the city’s boundaries. The most distinctive areas are found in the historic townscape of the central area within the medieval city walls focused on the River Wensum. Several parks, ecclesiastical open spaces and school playing fields provide “green oases” within the densely built-up environment and the setting for the city’s landmark buildings (the Castle, Anglican Cathedral, Roman Catholic Cathedral, St Peter Mancroft, St Giles’ Church and Guildhall). The Broads National Park extends into the Norwich Urban Area along the tidal River Wensum.

The Norwich City Council Landscape & Trees Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted June 2016) provides design principles for creating a strong sense of place and character that are broadly applicable to the whole Norwich Urban Area, as summarised below:

- Integrating development into surroundings - new developments enhance local character and positively link to the wider landscape/townscape
- Making good use of the site and existing features - developments make efficient use of land and topography, and retain or enhance existing landscape features of value
- Incorporating open space - protection of existing open space and provision of new open space, and public/private open space is well integrated into development sites
- Environment and GI considerations – landscaped spaces increase biodiversity/enhance wildlife, include SuDs, make space for trees and provide connectivity to surrounding areas
- Street layout – landscaped spaces reinforce the street layout hierarchy to improve the legibility and usability of streets
- Future maintenance - planned maintenance operations for hard and soft landscape areas sustain attractive and successful landscape settings for the long-term



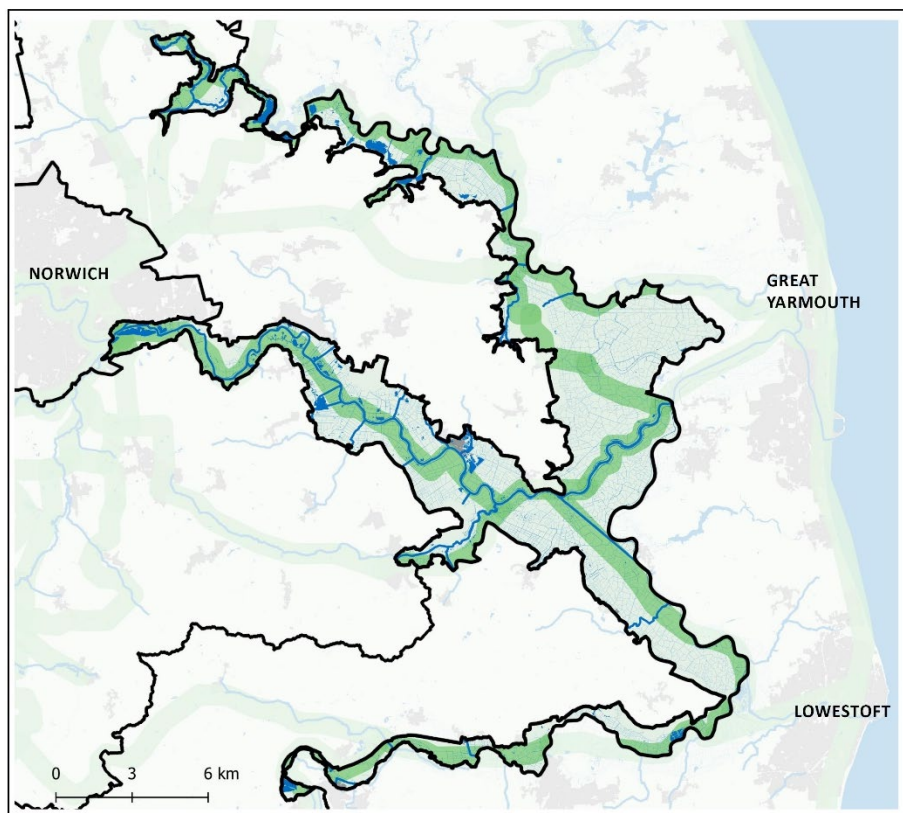


Earlham Park, Norwich. © Fisheye Images

Area 2 – The Broads Wetlands

Location

This GI Area comprises part of The Broads National Park within Broadland District and South Norfolk.



Strategic GI Priorities

- Improve habitat connectivity and support nature recovery to strengthen climate change resilience in line with the Broads Plan 2022-27
- Support water quality improvements in line with the Broads Plan 2022-27
- Address deficiencies in accessible greenspace provision at a range of scales within the identified priority areas
- Strengthen the network of greenways within and between settlements to support active travel
- Address health inequalities for rural communities, particularly in areas experiencing high levels of deprivation



Strategic GI Opportunities

Active Places

- Target new **accessible greenspace** at a range of scales in priority areas with identified deficiencies in provision (see **Map A1.2**) to offer opportunities for people in these areas to access greenspace for informal/formal recreation and experience nature close to where they live. For example, parts of Wroxham are identified as areas that should be prioritised for doorstep and local scale green space provision.
- Explore opportunities for enhancing and expanding the network of **urban greenways** and routes between settlements, providing off-road, traffic free active travel routes for walking and cycling - connecting places where people live, work and learn to green spaces, and integrating with the public transport network. For example, opportunities across the area to improve inclusive access – including improving links between land and water and to the water’s edge; improving infrastructure such as a crossing point over the river at Whitlingham Country Park; and opportunities to strengthen pedestrian/cycle access to the adjacent Greater Norwich Area.
- Explore opportunities for enhancing and expanding the provision of accessible green spaces to support **healthy lifestyles** - such as parks and gardens, nature reserves, allotments and other community food growing spaces - either through provision of new spaces, or enhancing/repurposing existing spaces, for informal/formal recreation activities, conservation volunteering (to support long-term stewardship) and food growing within settlements.

Natural Places

- Target habitat creation to increase existing capacity for supplying multiple **ecosystem service benefits** in identified areas of greatest demand for these services within the Broads Wetlands Area. For example creating new habitat for reducing surface water runoff to reduce flood risk and regulate water quality.
- Explore opportunities to create, enhance and restore priority habitats across the Broads Wetlands Area, and strengthen **ecological connectivity** to the surrounding countryside, in line with the priorities identified by the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy. For example, this may include opportunities for buffering existing wetland habitats at many of the designated sites which make up the majority of the Broads landscape. This may also include opportunities to support specific species recovery (eg. water voles).
- Explore opportunities to appropriately manage negative impacts on the Broads water environment, including invasive species, managing water quality, and recreational use of the Broads by powered vessels causing disturbance to habitats and species
- Explore opportunities to regenerate and enhance existing GI assets, and embed new GI features such as green roofs, sustainable drainage systems and street trees, into small-scale development.

Existing Strategic GI Assets

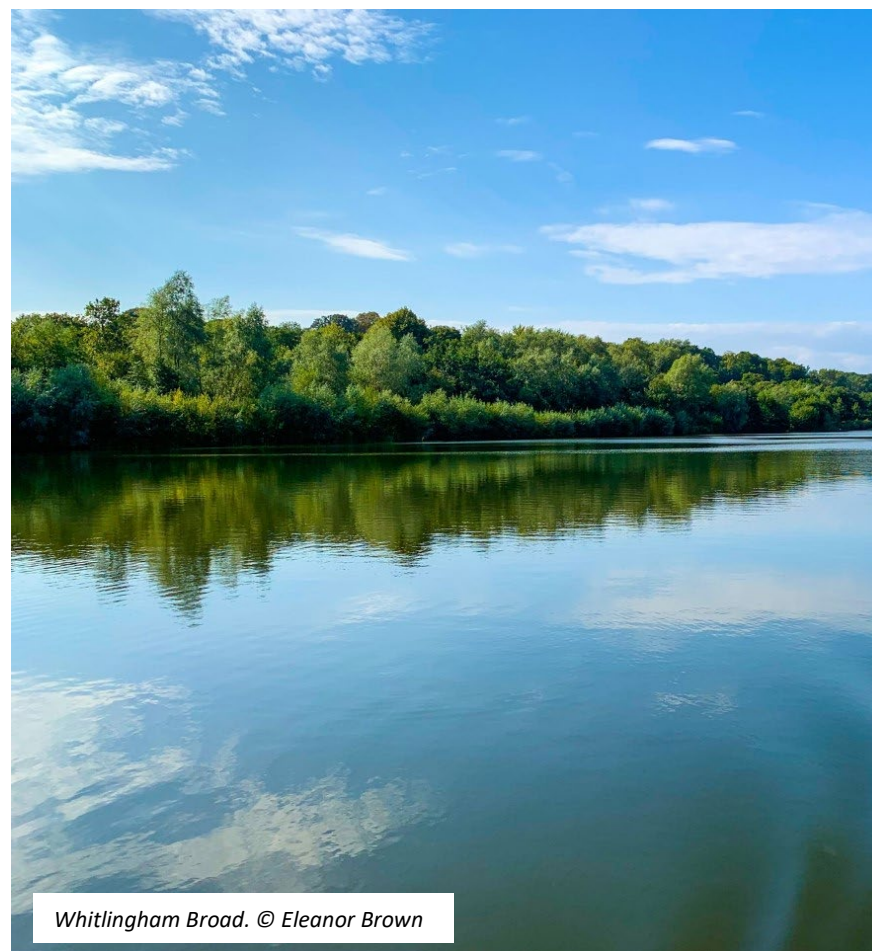
Recreational and healthy living GI assets

- **Walking and cycling routes** include, for example – parts of the Wherryman's Way walking route, parts of the Weavers' Way walking route, and part of the Angles Way walking route. National Cycle Network Route 1 also links into the area near Geldeston and Beccles in the south, and at Norwich.
- **Recreational areas** include for example the Mid-Yare and Bure Marshes National Nature Reserves, and Whitlingham Local Nature Reserve. The Thorpe Marshes, Upton Broad and Marshes and Ranworth Broad and Marshes Wildlife Trust Sites also provide countryside access. The waterways of the Broads also provide a significant area for access and recreation by a range of powered and unpowered watercraft.
- **Parks and green spaces** include a small number of spaces with various functions, mostly on the periphery of settlements outside the Broads. These include parks and allotments such as Caen Meadow on the edge of Wroxham, Whitlingham Country Park on the edge of Norwich, and allotments at Gillingham.



Ecological and geological GI assets

- **Designated sites** include 14 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) - for example Upton Broad & Marshes SSSI, these sites are also mostly designated as Special Protection Areas/Ramsar and as The Broads Special Area of Conservation. The area also includes the Bure Marshes and Mid-Yare National Nature Reserves, and 4 Local Nature Reserves - for example Whitlingham LNR and Bath Hills LNR. In addition the Broads area within Greater Norwich has 29 County Wildlife Sites.
- **Key habitats** include predominantly wetland habitats such as coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, which covers the majority of the area. There are also pockets of deciduous woodland and mosaic habitats on higher ground, along with very occasional pockets of good quality semi improved grassland.
- **Geological features** include, for example Bramerton Pits SSSI, known for rich, mainly marine vertebrate fossils.



Whitlingham Broad. © Eleanor Brown

Hydrological (water) GI assets

- **Operational catchments** – The Broads Wetland Area lies across three Operational Catchments – the Bure in the north, the Yare in the west, and the Waveney in the south. The lower reaches of the Rivers Chet, Yare and Waveney (east of Loddon) and the River Bure (from South Walsham Marshes towards the sea) are covered by the ‘Norfolk East TraC’ operational catchment, due to the transitional (Estuarine) or coastal nature of these stretches of water.
- **Key waterways and features** include – the River Yare, which flows from Norwich in a broadly southeasterly direction to Reedham before turning northeastwards to the coast, the Bure, which flows broadly southeastwards from Coltishall to the coast, and the Waveney, which forms much of the boundary of Greater Norwich between Ditchingham and where it meets the River Yare at Burgh Castle. The Broads are also associated with a number of significant waterbodies adjoining the network of waterways, such as Rockland Broad and St. Andrew’s Broad.

Further information can be found in the [Broadland Rivers Catchment Management Plan](#).



Heritage/cultural GI assets

- **Conservation areas** include – parts of 18 Conservation Areas, covering a number of small settlements such as Coltishall, mills and halls, and including the extensive Halvergate Marshes which contain the largest area of grazing marshes in the east of England, epitomising the marshland landscape of the Broads area.
- **Important historic buildings** include – 116 listed buildings, including for example, Langley Abbey remains (grade I), Mutton's Mill (grade II*) and White House Farmhouse (grade II). These assets include churches, mills, farmhouses and halls, illustrating the breath of local history in this area.
- **Industrial heritage features** - The connected broads and rivers were once part of an extensive network for communication and commerce, transporting goods such as fuel, building materials (including reed) and livestock and their products, especially wool.
- **Registered historic parks and gardens** include – Crown Point Park and Garden on the edge of Norwich, which is grade II listed, and includes mid-19th century designed gardens (altered at the beginning of the 20th century) set in a late 18th/early 19th century park.
- **Scheduled monuments** – 6 No. including, for example, Wroxham Bridge, Berney Arms windmill and Claxton Castle.



Berney Arms Windmill. © John Fielding

Landscape Character Context

The Broads is a nationally unique wetland landscape associated with the flood plains of the main rivers of the Bure, Yare and Waveney, and smaller tributary valleys such as the Ant and Chet.

The distinctive lowland wetland landscapes of the Broads have a strong sense of place and cultural pattern, reflected in the special qualities underpinning its National Park status. These include its sense of tranquillity, wildness and remoteness, the simplicity of the landscape created by undeveloped big skies, areas of open water, winding waterways, its diversity of riparian and wetland habitats (including habitats unique to the Broads) and the local character of beautiful churches, windmills and quiet villages. It is these special qualities that gives the Broads its value as a 'breathing space for the cure of souls' (Ted Ellis).

Many centuries of human intervention, principally in the form of medieval peat excavation in river valleys and land drainage of estuarine marshes and flats for agriculture, has resulted in a hugely diverse and dynamic, ever changing landscape, cultural and habitat mosaic. This includes lowland river valleys, freshwater fens, reed beds, areas of regeneration by wet woodland (alder carr), heathlands and estuarine grazing marsh; as well as areas of traditional vernacular settlement using materials linked with traditional industries such as reed cutting, and servicing trades associated with boating and sailing.

The following landscape character areas (LCAs) identified by the Broads Landscape Character Assessment fall within the Greater Norwich Area:

- 1: Waveney Valley – Outney Common and Bath Hills Area
- 2: Waveney Valley – East of A143 Bungay/Ditchingham to Shipmeadow/Geldeston
- 3: Waveney Valley – Barsham, Gillingham and Beccles Marshes
- 4: Waveney Valley – Aldeby to Burgh St Peter
- 7: Waveney Valley – Burgh St Peter to Haddiscoe Dismantled Railway
- 10: Yare Valley – Whitlingham Lane and Country Park
- 11: Yare Valley – Cary's Meadow to Postwick Grove/Whitlingham Marsh
- 12: Yare Valley – Kirby/Postwick to Rockland/Strumpshaw
- 13: Yare Valley – Claxton to Hardley Marshes
- 14: Yare Valley – Buckenham and Cantley Marshes and Carrs
- 15: Yare Valley – Cantley to Reedham
- 16: Yare Valley – Norton Marshes to Haddiscoe Dismantled Railway
- 17: Chet Valley
- 18: Haddiscoe Island
- 19: Halvergate Marshes
- 22: Bure Valley – Upstream of Wroxham Railway Bridge
- 23: Bure Valley – Downstream of Wroxham to Fleet Dyke, South Walsham
- 24: Bure Valley – South Walsham to Acle Marshes and Fens
- 25: Bure Valley – Fleggburgh to Bure Loop Arable Marshlands

Guidance on local issues/opportunities for conserving and enhancing positive characteristics contributing to the sense of place/special qualities of these LCAs can be found in the Broads Landscape Character Assessment (Broads Authority, 2016).

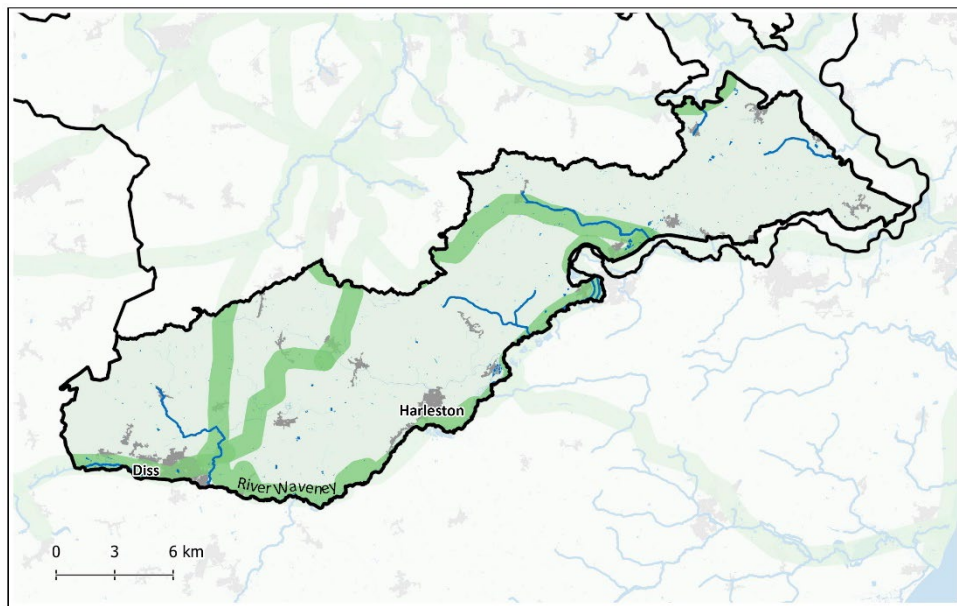


Whitlingham Broad. © Fisheye Images

Area 3 – Waveney Farmland

Location

This GI Area comprises the predominantly rural area associated with the Waveney catchment in the south of Greater Norwich within South Norfolk.



Strategic GI Priorities

- Address deficiencies in accessible greenspace provision at a range of scales within the identified priority areas
- Strengthen the network of greenways within and between settlements to support active travel
- Address health inequalities for urban and rural communities, particularly in areas experiencing high levels of deprivation
- Urban greening to increase green cover in the built environment, strengthen habitat connectivity and support urban nature recovery
- Embed GI into new development sites



Waveney Farmland, northeast of Diss. © Google

Strategic GI Opportunities

Active Places

- Target new **accessible greenspace** at a range of scales in priority areas with identified deficiencies in provision (see **Map A1.2**) to offer opportunities for people in these areas to access greenspace for informal/formal recreation and experience nature close to where they live. For example, parts of Diss and Harleston are identified as areas that should be prioritised for doorstep and local scale green space provision.
- Explore opportunities for enhancing and expanding the network of **urban greenways** and routes between settlements, providing off-road, traffic free active travel routes for walking and cycling - connecting places where people live, work and learn to green spaces, and integrating with the public transport network. For example, opportunities across the area to improve inclusive access - public rights of way in this area are frequently stretches of unpaved routes across agricultural land, with poor mobility access which could be improved; and there are opportunities to improve pedestrian/cycle connectivity (such as between Diss and Harleston, Bungay to Beccles, Beccles to Oulton Broad, and around Earsham), including links to the wider Norfolk Trails network.
- Explore opportunities for enhancing and expanding the provision of accessible green spaces to support **healthy lifestyles** - such as urban parks and gardens, nature reserves, allotments and other community food growing spaces - either through provision of new spaces, or enhancing/repurposing existing spaces, for informal/formal recreation activities, conservation volunteering (to support long-term stewardship) and food growing within urban areas. This may also include opportunities to support sustainable tourism.

Natural Places

- Target increasing the level of green cover within the built environment in priority areas for **urban greening** within the Waveney Farmland Area (see **Map A1.3**) - such as opportunities for new and/or enhanced provision of urban open spaces, woodlands, streets, squares and green roofs/walls on buildings - to strengthen habitat connectivity and support urban nature recovery.
- Target habitat creation to increase existing capacity for supplying multiple **ecosystem service benefits** in identified areas of greatest demand for these services within the Waveney Farmland Area. For example, expanding the urban tree canopy to support carbon storage/sequestration, regulation of air/noise pollution and to regulate the local climate; and creating new habitat for reducing surface water runoff to reduce flood risk and regulate water quality.
- Explore opportunities to create, enhance and restore priority habitats across the Waveney Farmland Area, and strengthen **ecological connectivity** to the surrounding countryside, in line with the priorities identified by the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy. For example, this may include opportunities for buffering and connecting valuable ancient woodland at Gawdyhall Big Wood, Harleston (SSSI); buffering existing fen habitats at Royden Fen and restoring floodplain fen habitats; or maintaining and strengthening the wet woodland habitats in the Waveney Valley. This may also include opportunities to support specific species recovery (eg. water voles).
- Explore opportunities to regenerate and enhance existing GI assets, and embed new GI features such as green roofs, sustainable drainage systems and street trees, into small-scale **development sites** associated with settlements, to support urban greening.

Existing Strategic GI Assets

Recreational and healthy living GI assets

- **Walking and cycling routes** include, for example – parts of the Boudicca Way walking route, and parts of the Angles Way walking route. National Cycle Network Route 1 also links into the area near to Thwaite St. Mary/Ellingham, heading broadly north-south.
- **Recreational areas** include for example the Broome Heath and Roydon Fen Local Nature Reserves, and Frenze Beck Nature Reserve (a County Wildlife Site). There are also a number of small pockets of Access Land, such as Gissingham Common which provide countryside access.
- **Parks and green spaces** include a broad range of spaces with various functions, mostly on the periphery of or within settlements. These include parks, such as Diss Park and Mere, and The Green at Pulham Market; and allotments such as at Pulham St Mary and at Ditchingham.



Ecological and geological GI assets

- **Designated sites** include 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) - for example Geldeston Meadows SSSI and Sexton Wood SSSI. Those SSSI sites on the edge of the area which are predominantly within the Broads (eg. Geldeston Meadows SSSI) are also mostly designated as Special Protection Areas/Ramsar and as The Broads Special Area of Conservation. The area also includes 3 Local Nature Reserves - for example Broome Heath LNR. In addition the Waveney Farmland Area has 94 County Wildlife Sites.
- **Key habitats** includes a range of habitats interspersed with the farmland, such as grassland and deciduous woodland, with floodplain grazing marsh and wet woodland along the corridor of the River Waveney and its tributaries.
- **Geological features** include, for example Broome Heath Pit SSSI, which provides the only surviving exposure of the Broome Terrace, the flood plain of an ancient river.



Hydrological (water) GI assets

- **Operational catchments** – The Waveney Farmland Area lies predominantly within the Waveney Operational Catchment.
- **Key waterways and features** include – the River Waveney forms much of the southern boundary of the area, flowing broadly west to east, until it meets the Broads close to Bungay. A number of smaller tributaries, such as Broome Beck, flow into the Waveney.

Further information can be found in the [Broadland Rivers Catchment Management Plan](#).

Heritage/cultural GI assets

- **Conservation areas** – parts of 21 Conservation Areas, covering the historic areas of a number of settlements of various sizes such as Diss, Scole and Ditchingham.
- **Important historic buildings** - there are over 1,250 Statutory Listed Buildings (Grade I, II* and II) both within and outside of Conservation Areas. These include for example the grade I listed Scole Inn, Hedenham Hall, and the Church of St. Andrew, Frenze. These assets include churches, farmhouses and halls, illustrating the breath of local history in this area.
- **Registered historic parks and gardens** – Grade II* listed Raveningham Hall - A late 18th century house surrounded by a park of the same date, with early 20th century Arts and Crafts-style gardens designed by Somers Clark; and grade II listed Ditchingham Hall.
- **Scheduled monuments** – 5 No. including for example Scole Roman settlement, and earthworks on Broome Heath.

Landscape Character Context

The Waveney Farmland Area is a mixed farmland landscape. The dominant character type is Tributary Farmland as identified in the South Norfolk District Landscape Character Assessment (South Norfolk District Council, 2001), with Plateau Farmland to the north, and the Rural River Valley of the Waveney in the south.

The predominant land use is arable farming, including large fields, often with denuded boundaries. The open arable landscape is broken by deciduous woodland blocks.

Settlement pattern is scattered, with larger settlements along the Waveney Valley in the south, including Diss and Harleston.

Landscape character types and areas identified within the Yare Farmland Area include:

Rural River Valley

- A5 Waveney Rural River Valley

Tributary Farmland

- B1 Tas Tributary Farmland
- B4 Waveney Tributary Farmland
- B5 Chet Tributary Farmland

Tributary Farmland

- C2 Thurlton Tributary Farmland with Parkland

Plateau Farmland

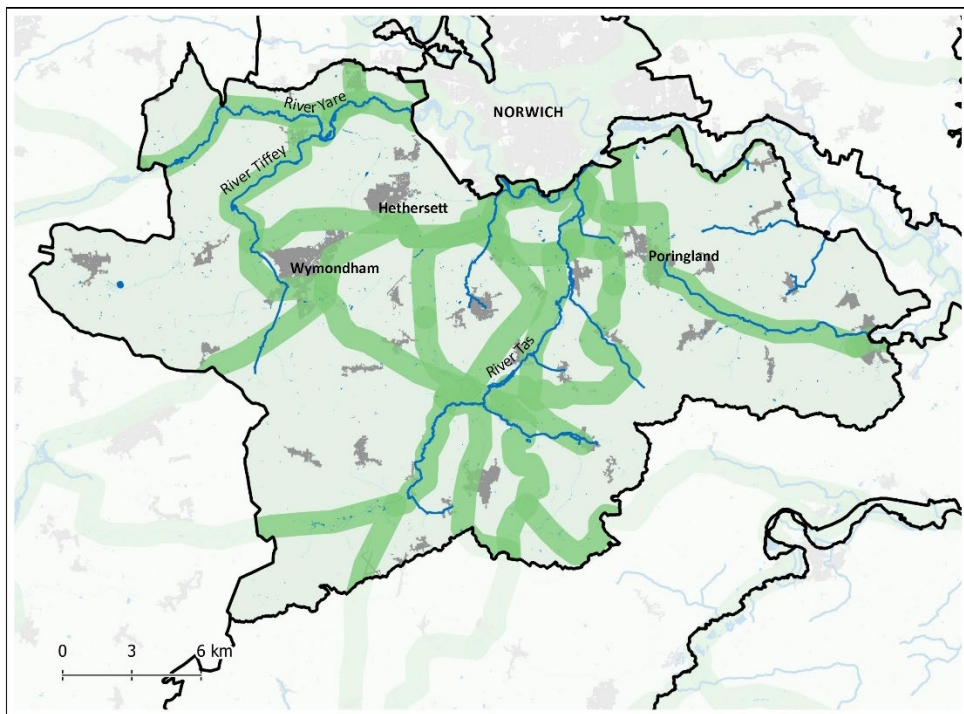
- E2 Great Moulton Plateau Farmland

Guidance on local issues/opportunities for conserving and enhancing positive characteristics contributing to the sense of place/special qualities of these landscape character types/areas can be found in the South Norfolk District Landscape Character Assessment.

Area 4 – Yare Farmland

Location

This GI Area comprises the predominantly rural area associated with the Yare catchment south of the City of Norwich within South Norfolk.



Strategic GI Priorities

- Address deficiencies in accessible greenspace provision at a range of scales within the identified priority areas
- Strengthen the network of greenways within and between settlements to support active travel
- Address health inequalities for urban and rural communities, particularly in areas experiencing high levels of deprivation
- Urban greening to increase green cover in the built environment, strengthen habitat connectivity and support urban nature recovery
- Embed GI into the Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor Strategic Growth Area



Strategic GI Opportunities

Active Places

- Target new **accessible greenspace** at a range of scales in priority areas with identified deficiencies in provision (see **Map A1.2**) to offer opportunities for people in these areas to access greenspace for informal/formal recreation and experience nature close to where they live. For example, parts of Hethersett are identified as areas that should be prioritised for doorstep and local scale green space provision, particularly in the south of the town where there is higher deprivation.
- Explore opportunities for enhancing and expanding the network of **urban greenways** and routes between settlements, providing off-road, traffic free active travel routes for walking and cycling - connecting places where people live, work and learn to green spaces, and integrating with the public transport network. For example, opportunities across the area to improve inclusive access - public rights of way in this area are frequently stretches of unpaved routes across agricultural land, with poor mobility access which could be improved; and there are opportunities to improve pedestrian/cycle connectivity (such as at Wymondham, Hethersett and Long Stratton, as well as between and around smaller settlements, for example Kimberley to Carleton Forehoe, or Tasburgh to Saxlingham) including links to the wider Norfolk Trails network.
- Explore opportunities for enhancing and expanding the provision of accessible green spaces to support **healthy lifestyles** - such as urban parks and gardens, nature reserves, allotments and other community food growing spaces - either through provision of new spaces, or enhancing/repurposing existing spaces, for informal/formal recreation

activities, conservation volunteering (to support long-term stewardship) and food growing within urban areas.

Natural Places

- Target increasing the level of green cover within the built environment in priority areas for **urban greening** within the Yare Farmland Area (see **Map A1.3**) - such as opportunities for new and/or enhanced provision of urban open spaces, woodlands, streets, squares and green roofs/walls on buildings - to strengthen habitat connectivity and support urban nature recovery.
- Target habitat creation to increase existing capacity for supplying multiple **ecosystem service benefits** in identified areas of greatest demand for these services within the Yare Farmland Area. For example, expanding the urban tree canopy to support carbon storage/sequestration, regulation of air/noise pollution and to regulate the local climate; and creating new habitat for reducing surface water runoff to reduce flood risk and regulate water quality.
- Explore opportunities to create, enhance and restore priority habitats across the Yare Farmland Area, and strengthen **ecological connectivity** to the surrounding countryside, in line with the priorities identified by the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy. For example, this may include opportunities for buffering and connecting existing ancient woodland in Spring Wood, south of Hempnall Green; or buffering existing wet grassland habitats at Shotesham Common. This may also include opportunities to support specific species recovery.
- Explore opportunities to regenerate and enhance existing GI assets, and embed new GI features such as green roofs, sustainable drainage systems and street trees, into the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor **Strategic Growth Area** to support urban greening.

Existing Strategic GI Assets

Recreational and healthy living GI assets

- **Walking and cycling routes** include, for example – parts of the Boudicca Way walking route, and parts of the Wherryman's Way walking route. National Cycle Network Route 1 also links into the area at Norwich, broadly following the northeastern edge of the Area until Loddon.
- **Recreational areas** include for example golf courses such as Barnham Broom Golf Club and Bawburgh Golf Club; and the Smockhill Common, Dunston Common and Marston Marshes Local Nature Reserves. The Lower Wood (Ashwellthorpe) Wildlife Trust Site also provides countryside access.
- **Parks and green spaces** include a broad range of spaces with various functions, mostly on the periphery of or within settlements. These include parks, such as Ketts Park in Wymondham and Hethersett Memorial Ground; and allotments such as at Saxlingham Nethergate and Mulbarton Oakley Park South Allotments.



Ecological and geological GI assets

- **Designated sites** include 15 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) - for example Lower Wood Ashwellthorpe SSSI, Flordon Common SSSI and Forncett Meadows SSSI. Those SSSI sites on the edge of the area which are predominantly within the Broads (eg. Yare Broads and Marshes SSSI) are also mostly designated as Special Protection Areas/Ramsar and as The Broads Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Flordon Common SSSI and Coston Fen, Runhall SSSI are also designated as part of the Norfolk Valley Fens SAC. The area also includes a small part of the Mid-Yare National Nature Reserve near to Surlingham, and 7 Local Nature Reserves - for example Toll's Meadow, Wymondham LNR and Marston Marshes LNR. In addition, the Yare Farmland Area has 177 County Wildlife Sites.
- **Key habitats** includes a range of habitats interspersed with the farmland, such as grassland and deciduous woodland, with coastal and floodplain grazing marsh along river and stream corridors. There are also mosaic habitats, and a small pocket of heathland at Furze Hill.
- **Geological features** include for example the Caistor St. Edmund Chalk Pit SSSI, which provides exposure of the late Campanian Beeston Chalk, dated to around 75 million years ago. It has many fossils of molluscs and sea urchins.



Lower Wood Ashwellthorpe SSSI. © Elizabeth Dack

Hydrological (water) GI assets

- **Operational catchments** – the Yare Farmland Area lies predominantly within the Yare Operational Catchment.
- **Key waterways and features** include – the River Yare flows through the north of the area, from Coston to Bawburgh, before following the edge of Norwich City (partly outside this area). The River Yare then joins the Broads area close to Trowse Newton. A number of smaller tributaries, such as the River Tas, flow into the Yare from this area.

Further information can be found in the [Broadland Rivers Catchment Management Plan](#).



Heritage/cultural GI assets

- **Conservation areas** – parts of 28 Conservation Areas, covering the historic areas of a number of settlements of various sizes such as Wymondham, Fritton and Bergh Apton.
- **Important historic buildings** - there are nearly 1600 Statutory Listed Buildings (Grade I, II* and II) both within and outside of Conservation Areas. These include for example the grade I listed Hales Hall, Kirstead Hall, and the Church of St. Ethelbert, Thurton. These assets include churches, farmhouses, cottages and halls, illustrating the breath of local history in this area.
- **Registered historic parks and gardens** – 5 No including for example the grade II* listed Intwood Hall, a manor house with walled gardens of 16th century origins set in a mid-18th century park; and Kimberley Hall, an early 18th century house with formal garden, set in a park laid out between 1762 and 1778.
- **Scheduled monuments** – 28 No. including a range of features such as moated sites, Abbeys (for example Wymondham Abbey), bowl barrows, tumuli and henges (for example Arminghall Henge) as well as Moot Hill, a ring motte, and Venta Icenorum, a Roman town with associated prehistoric, Anglo-Saxon and medieval remains at Caistor.

Landscape Character Context

The Yare Farmland Area is a mixed farmland landscape. The dominant character types include Plateau/Settled Plateau Farmland and Tributary Farmland interspersed with Rural River Valleys as identified in the South Norfolk District Landscape Character Assessment (South Norfolk District Council, 2001).

The predominant land use is arable farming, which occupy large fields, often with denuded boundaries. Associated with the valleys there are some occasional small areas of pasture which are used for cattle grazing. The open arable landscape is broken by deciduous woodland blocks, particularly following the tributary corridors, which impart a semi-wooded, semi-enclosed character to parts of the area.

There are a number of settlements in the area, including the town of Wymondham and large village of Hethersett.

Landscape character types and areas identified within the Yare Farmland Area include:

Rural River Valley

- A1 Tas Rural River Valley
- A2 Yare/Tiffey Rural River Valley

Plateau Farmland

- E1 Ashwellthorpe Plateau Farmland
- E2 Great Moulton Plateau Farmland
- E3 Hingham - Mattishall Plateau Farmland

Tributary Farmland

- B1 Tas Tributary Farmland
- B2 Tiffey Tributary Farmland
- B3 Rockland Tributary Farmland
- B5 Chet Tributary Farmland
- B6 Yare Tributary Farmland

Tributary Farmland with Parkland

- C1 Yare Tributary Farmland with Parkland

Settled Plateau Farmland

- D1 Wymondham Settled Plateau Farmland
- D2 Poringland Settled Plateau Farmland

Valley Urban Fringe

- F1 Yare Valley Urban Fringe

Fringe Farmland

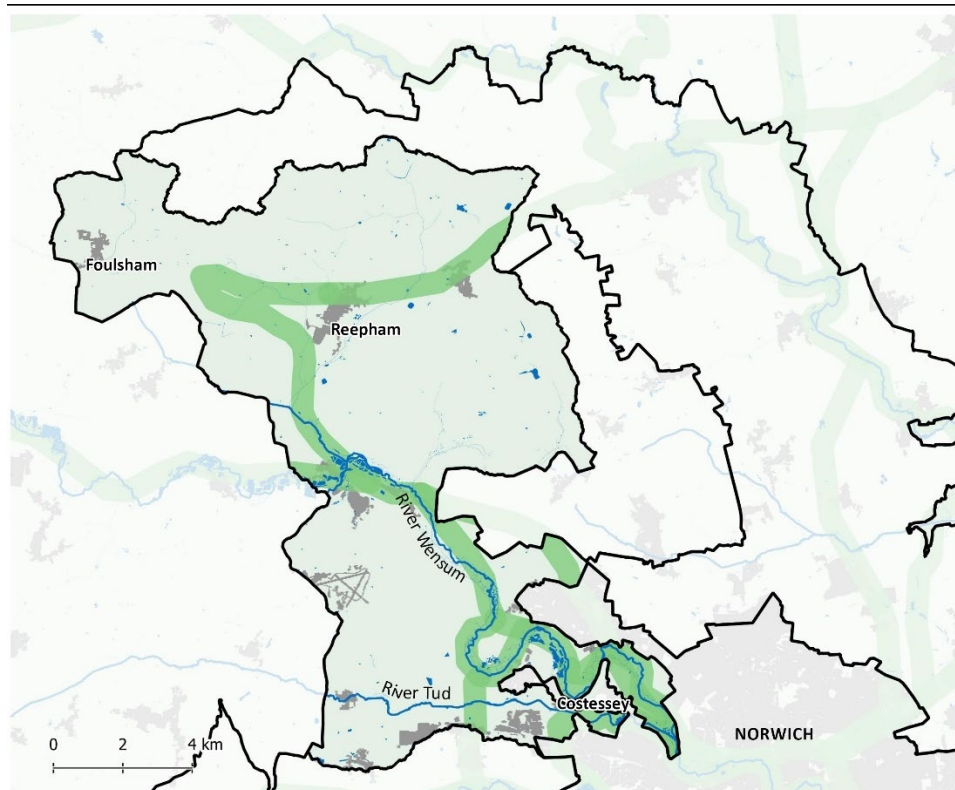
- G1 Easton Fringe Farmland

Guidance on local issues/opportunities for conserving and enhancing positive characteristics contributing to the sense of place/special qualities of these landscape character types/areas can be found in the South Norfolk District Landscape Character Assessment.

Area 5 – Wensum Farmland

Location

This GI Area comprises the predominantly rural area associated with the Wensum catchment to the northwest of the City of Norwich within Broadland District.



Strategic GI Priorities

- Address deficiencies in accessible greenspace provision at a range of scales within the identified priority areas
- Strengthen the network of greenways within and between settlements to support active travel
- Address health inequalities for urban and rural communities, particularly in areas experiencing high levels of deprivation
- Strengthen habitat connectivity and support nature recovery
- Embed GI into new development sites



Strategic GI Opportunities

Active Places

- Target new **accessible greenspace** at a range of scales in priority areas with identified deficiencies in provision (see **Map A1.2**) to offer opportunities for people in these areas to access greenspace for informal/formal recreation and experience nature close to where they live. For example, parts of Foulsham have been identified as a priority for the provision of green space within the 'Close to Home' standard, particularly sites that meet the Neighbourhood standard of provision.
- Explore opportunities for enhancing and expanding the network of **urban greenways** and routes between settlements, providing off-road, traffic free active travel routes for walking and cycling - connecting places where people live, work and learn to green spaces, and integrating with the public transport network. For example, opportunities across the area to improve inclusive access – the area contains a number of public rights of way which are not accessible paths; and there are opportunities to improve pedestrian/cycle connectivity, particularly in settlements to the west of Norwich, including links to the wider Norfolk Trails network.
- Explore opportunities for enhancing and expanding the provision of accessible green spaces to support **healthy lifestyles** - such as urban parks and gardens, nature reserves, allotments and other community food growing spaces - either through provision of new spaces, or enhancing/repurposing existing spaces, for informal/formal recreation activities, conservation volunteering (to support long-term stewardship) and food growing within urban areas.

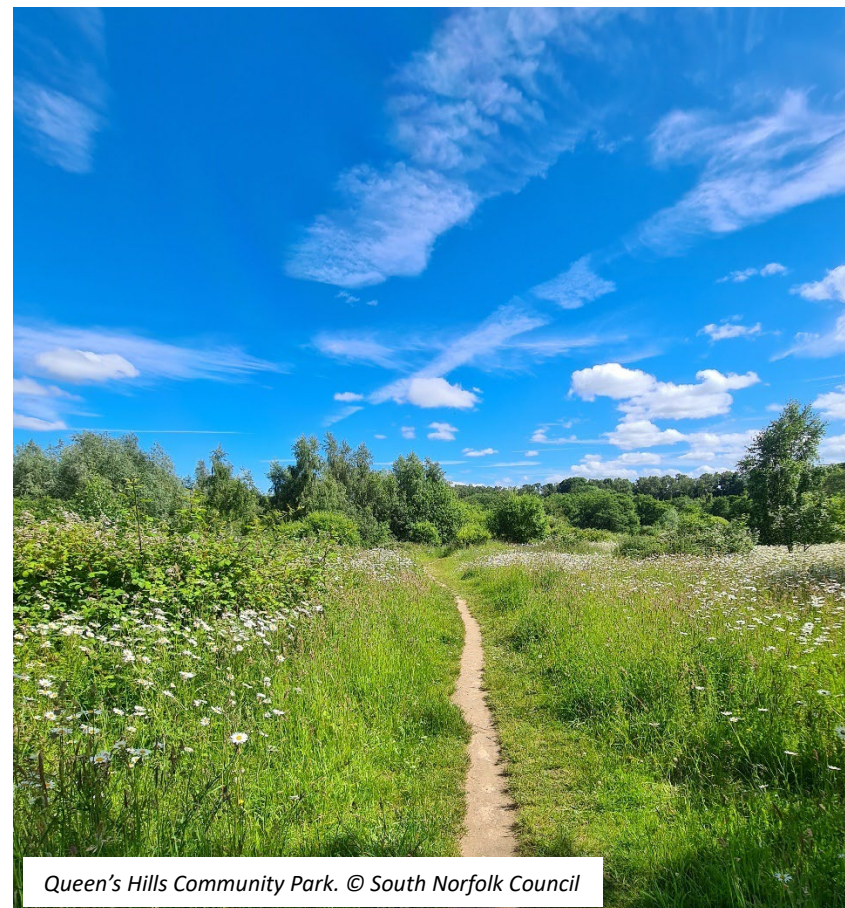
Natural Places

- Target habitat creation to increase existing capacity for supplying multiple **ecosystem service benefits** in identified areas of greatest demand for these services within the Wensum Farmland Area. For example, expanding the urban tree canopy to support carbon storage/sequestration, regulation of air/noise pollution and to regulate the local climate; and creating new habitat for reducing surface water runoff to reduce flood risk and regulate water quality.
- Explore opportunities to create, enhance and restore priority habitats across the Wensum Farmland Area, and strengthen **ecological connectivity** to the surrounding countryside, in line with the priorities identified by the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy. For example, this may include opportunities for buffering and connecting existing woodland around Queen's Hills; buffering existing fen habitats at Whitwell Common (SSSI); or linking important grasslands on the upper slopes above the floodplain. This may also include opportunities to support specific species recovery (eg. bats).
- Explore opportunities to regenerate and enhance existing GI assets, and embed new GI features such as green roofs, sustainable drainage systems and street trees, into small-scale **development sites** associated with settlements, to support urban greening.

Existing Strategic GI Assets

Recreational and healthy living GI assets

- **Walking and cycling routes** include, for example – parts of the Marriott's Way, a footpath, bridleway, and cycle route that runs between Aylsham and Norwich. Part of Marriott's Way also follows National Cycle Network Route 1, an extensive nationwide route, which in this area connects Foulsham and Reepham to Norwich.
- **Recreational areas** include, for example golf courses such as Weston Park Golf Club and Costessey Park Golf Club. The Forestry Commission Woodland at Great Wood, Haveringland, as well as a number of other areas of Access Land such as Alderford Common also provide countryside access.
- **Parks and green spaces** include a broad range of spaces with various functions, mostly on the periphery of or within settlements. These include parks, such as Queen's Hills Community Park; and allotments such as at Reepham where there are 3 allotment sites.



Queen's Hills Community Park. © South Norfolk Council

Ecological and geological GI assets

- **Designated sites** include 6 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) - for example Foxley Wood SSSI and the River Wensum SSSI. Booton Common SSSI designated as part of the Norfolk Valley Fens Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and the River Wensum SSSI is also a designated SAC. The area also includes a small part of the Foxley Wood National Nature Reserve near to Themelthorpe. In addition the Wensum Farmland Area has 76 County Wildlife Sites.
- **Key habitats** includes a range of habitats interspersed with the farmland, such as grassland and deciduous woodland. There are also significant areas of wetland habitats including coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, which is primarily found along the corridor of the River Wensum and its tributaries.



Hydrological (water) GI assets

- **Operational catchments** – the Wensum Farmland Area lies predominantly within the Wensum Operational Catchment.
- **Key waterways and features** include – the River Wensum which meanders through the area, from Lenwade to Costessey, before flowing eastwards through Norwich City (outside this area). The River Tud also flows west-east through the area from Honingham to Costessey, where it joins the Wensum. The Wensum is associated with a number of waterbodies along its floodplains, such as those at Costessey Pits.

Further information can be found in the [Broadland Rivers Catchment Management Plan](#).



Salle Park. © Evelyn Simak

Heritage/cultural GI assets

- **Conservation areas** – parts of 7 Conservation Areas, covering the historic areas of a number of small settlements such as Foulsham and Cawston.
- **Important historic buildings** - over 300 Statutory Listed Buildings (Grade I, II* and II) both within and outside of Conservation Areas. These include for example the grade I listed Haydon Hall, and the Church of Holy Innocents, Foulsham, as well as grade II* listed Old Hall Farmhouse, Foulsham. These assets include churches, farmhouses, cottages and halls, illustrating the breath of local history in this area.
- **Registered historic parks and gardens** – grade II* listed Heydon Hall, an early 18th century landscape park and woodland, further developed in the 19th century, with formal gardens and lawns beside the house; and grade II listed Salle Park.
- **Scheduled monuments** – 3 No. including a round barrow southeast of the Lodges, a tumulus in the Warren, and a wayside cross northwest of Stump Cross Farm

Landscape Character Context

The Wensum Farmland Area is a mixed farmland landscape. The dominant character types include Plateau and Tributary Farmland, cut by the Wensum River Valley as identified in the Broadland District Landscape Character Assessment (Broadland District Council, 2013).

The River Wensum and its valley slopes form a strong division between Wooded Heath Mosaic and Tributary Farmland. The Wensum meanders through a confined valley floodplain. It is enclosed to the south by wooded rolling slopes, and to the north by less dramatic, gentler arable slopes. The Valley has a shallow V-shape, and the valley sides contain an intimate landscape.

Woodland is a particular feature of the valley; most commonly associated with large mixed blocks that blanket the river valley sides; interspersed with a predominantly arable farmland landscape.

Landscape character types and areas identified within the Wensum Farmland Area include:

Plateau Farmland

- C1 Foulsham and Reepham Plateau Farmland

Tributary Farmland

- D1 Cawston Tributary Farmland
- D2 Weston Green Tributary Farmland

Wooded Estatelands

- E1 Blickling and Oulton Wooded Estatelands

River Valley

- A1 River Wensum River Valley

Rural River Valley

- A3 Tud Rural River Valley (South Norfolk District LCA)
- A4 Wensum Rural River Valley (South Norfolk District LCA)

Fringe Farmland

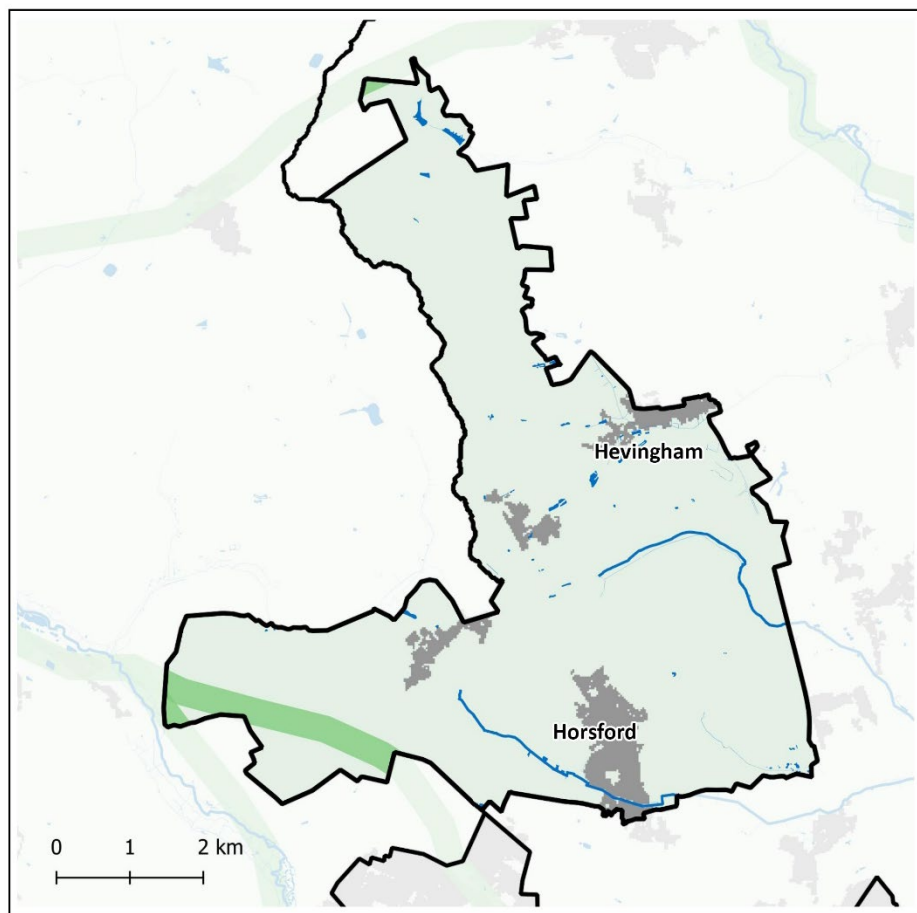
- G1 Easton Fringe Farmland (South Norfolk District LCA)

Guidance on local issues/opportunities for conserving and enhancing positive characteristics contributing to the sense of place/special qualities of these landscape character types/areas can be found in the Broadland District Landscape Character Assessment.

Area 6 – Horsford Heaths & Woods

Location

This GI Area comprises the predominantly rural and wooded area to the north of the City of Norwich within Broadland District.



Strategic GI Priorities

- Address deficiencies in accessible greenspace provision at a range of scales within the identified priority areas
- Strengthen the network of greenways within and between settlements to support active travel
- Address health inequalities for urban and rural communities, particularly in areas experiencing high levels of deprivation
- Strengthen habitat connectivity and support nature recovery
- Embed GI into new development sites



Strategic GI Opportunities

Active Places

- Target new **accessible greenspace** at a range of scales in priority areas with identified deficiencies in provision (see **Map A1.2**) to offer opportunities for people in these areas to access greenspace for informal/formal recreation and experience nature close to where they live. For example, parts of both Horsford and Felthorpe are identified as areas that should be prioritised for doorstep and local scale green space provision.
- Explore opportunities for enhancing and expanding the network of **urban greenways** and routes between settlements, providing off-road, traffic free active travel routes for walking and cycling - connecting places where people live, work and learn to green spaces, and integrating with the public transport network. For example, opportunities across the area to improve pedestrian/cycle connectivity and inclusive access – particularly to strategic assets such as Broadland Country Park.
- Explore opportunities for enhancing and expanding the provision of accessible green spaces to support **healthy lifestyles** - such as parks and gardens, nature reserves, allotments and other community food growing spaces - either through provision of new spaces, or enhancing/repurposing existing spaces, for informal/formal recreation activities, conservation volunteering (to support long-term stewardship) and food growing within settlements.

Natural Places

- Target habitat creation to increase existing capacity for supplying multiple **ecosystem service benefits** in identified areas of greatest demand for these services within the Horsford Heaths and Woods Area. For example, expanding the tree canopy where appropriate to support carbon storage/sequestration, regulation of air/noise pollution and to regulate the local climate; and creating new habitat for reducing surface water runoff to reduce flood risk and regulate water quality.
- Explore opportunities to create, enhance and restore priority habitats across the Horsford Heaths and Woods Area, and strengthen **ecological connectivity** to the surrounding countryside, in line with the priorities identified by the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy. For example, this may include opportunities for buffering existing heathland at Buxton Heath (SSSI/SAC) and Cawston and Marsham Heaths (SSSI). This may also include opportunities to support specific species recovery.
- Explore opportunities to regenerate and enhance existing GI assets, and embed new GI features such as green roofs, sustainable drainage systems and street trees, into small-scale **development sites** associated with settlements, to support urban greening.

Existing Strategic GI Assets

Recreational and healthy living GI assets

- **Walking and cycling routes** include, for example – parts of the Marriott's Way, a footpath, bridleway, and cycle route that runs between Aylsham and Norwich.
- **Recreational areas** include, for example Broadland Country Park at Horsford. The Forestry Commission Woodland at Hevingham Park, and Buxton Heath, as well as a number of other areas of Access Land on woodland and heath also provide countryside access.
- **Parks and green spaces** include a broad range of spaces with various functions, mostly on the periphery of or within settlements. These include parks and recreation grounds, such as the playing fields at Hevingham and Recreation Ground at Horsford; and allotments such as at Horsford.



Ecological and geological GI assets

- **Designated sites** include 4 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) - for example Alderford Common SSSI, and Buxton Heath SSSI. Buxton Heath is also designated as part of the Norfolk Valley Fens Special Area of Conservation (SAC). In addition, the Horsford Heaths and Woods Area has 21 County Wildlife Sites.
- **Key habitats** include significant areas of heathland, with grassland, woodland and mosaic habitats. There are also small areas of lowland fen.



Hydrological (water) GI assets

- **Operational catchments** – much of the Horsford Heaths and Woods Area lies within the Bure Operational Catchment. The part of the area west of Felthorpe lies in the Wensum Operational Catchment.
- **Key waterways and features** – there are no main rivers in this area. There are two small watercourses (which drain into the River Bure to the east), and a number of small streams/ditches and waterbodies.

Further information can be found in the [Broadland Rivers Catchment Management Plan](#).

Heritage/cultural GI assets

- **Important historic buildings** - 18 Statutory Listed Buildings (Grade II* and II). These include for example the grade II* listed Parish Church of St. Margaret, Felthorpe, as well as grade II listed Felthorpe Hall, and the Dog Public House, Horsford. These assets include churches, farmhouses and halls, illustrating the breath of local history in this area.
- **Scheduled monuments** – 2 No, including two round barrows on Horsford Heath and a round barrow north of Sandy Lane



Felthorpe Hall. © Adrian S Pye

Landscape Character Context

The Horsford Heaths and Woods Area is predominantly comprised of a Woodland Heath Mosaic landscape as identified in the Broadland District Landscape Character Assessment (Broadland District Council, 2013). This is a simple plateau landscape, with few variations in topography.

The area was once entirely covered by heathland, and now includes a mixture of arable farmland, old deciduous woodland and recent coniferous plantations. Only small remnant patches of heathland and fen remain, often protected by European designations for their high ecological value.

Large rectangular arable fields abut the woodland in northern and southern parts of the area. Woodland cover is more intermittent in central parts, and small arable fields are interspersed with small-scale industrial units and isolated 20th century residential developments.

Landscape character types and areas identified within the Bure Farmland Area include:

Woodland Heath Mosaic

- B1 Horsford Woodland Heath Mosaic

Guidance on local issues/opportunities for conserving and enhancing positive characteristics contributing to the sense of place/special qualities of this landscape character types/areas can be found in the Broadland District Landscape Character Assessment.



Paths at Broadland Country Park. © Fisheye Images

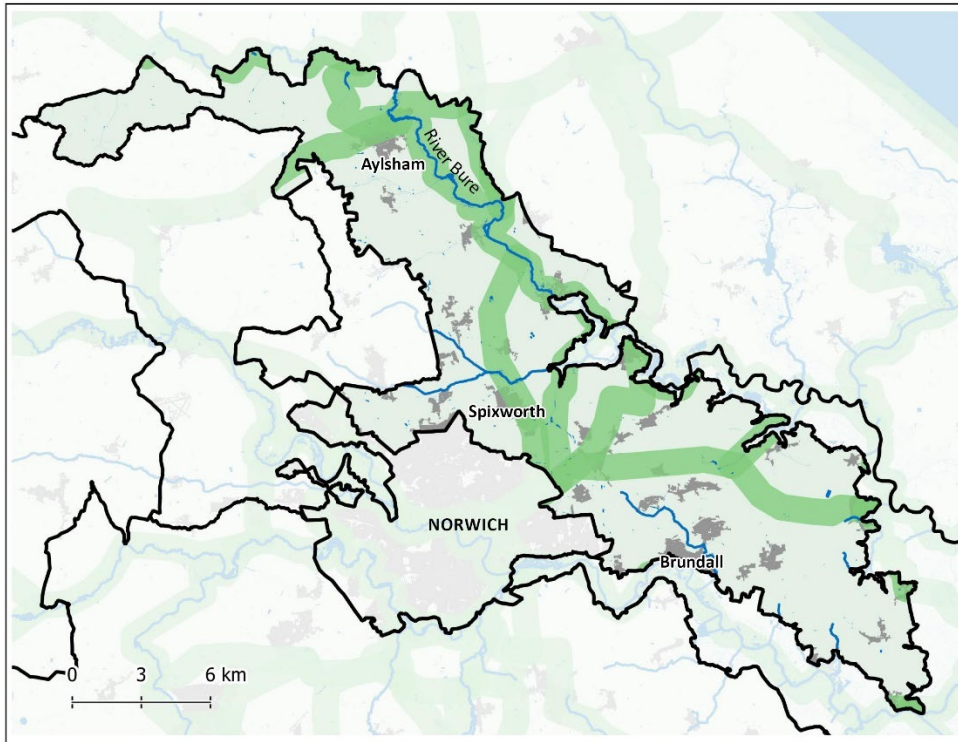


Broadland Country Park. © Fisheye Images

Area 7 – Bure Farmland

Location

This GI Area comprises the predominantly rural area associated with the Bure catchment to the northeast of the City of Norwich within Broadland District.



Strategic GI Priorities

- Address deficiencies in accessible greenspace provision at a range of scales within the identified priority areas
- Strengthen the network of greenways within and between settlements to support active travel
- Address health inequalities for urban and rural communities, particularly in areas experiencing high levels of deprivation
- Urban greening to increase green cover in the built environment, strengthen habitat connectivity and support urban nature recovery
- Embed GI into the North-East Norwich Strategic Growth Area



Strategic GI Opportunities

Active Places

- Target new **accessible greenspace** at a range of scales in priority areas with identified deficiencies in provision (see **Map A1.2**) to offer opportunities for people in these areas to access greenspace for informal/formal recreation and experience nature close to where they live. For example, the villages of Blofield and Brundall are identified as priorities for provision of the Neighbourhood standard of greenspace.
- Explore opportunities for enhancing and expanding the network of **urban greenways** and routes between settlements, providing off-road, traffic free active travel routes for walking and cycling - connecting places where people live, work and learn to green spaces, and integrating with the public transport network. For example, opportunities to improve inclusive access – both as part of any new GI provision provided by Strategic Growth, and for existing routes and connections. This may include enhancing pedestrian/cycle connectivity between Wroxham and Norwich (the Broadland Way) linking with Marriott's Way and the Bure Valley Path.
- Explore opportunities for enhancing and expanding the provision of accessible green spaces to support **healthy lifestyles** - such as urban parks and gardens, nature reserves, allotments and other community food growing spaces - either through provision of new spaces, or enhancing/repurposing existing spaces, for informal/formal recreation activities, conservation volunteering (to support long-term stewardship) and food growing within urban areas.

Natural Places

- Target increasing the level of green cover within the built environment in priority areas for **urban greening** within the Bure Farmland Area (see **Map A1.3**) - such as opportunities for new and/or enhanced provision of urban open spaces, woodlands, streets, squares and green roofs/walls on buildings - to strengthen habitat connectivity and support urban nature recovery.
- Target habitat creation to increase existing capacity for supplying multiple **ecosystem service benefits** in identified areas of greatest demand for these services within the Bure Farmland Area. For example, expanding the urban tree canopy to support carbon storage/sequestration, regulation of air/noise pollution and to regulate the local climate; and creating new habitat for reducing surface water runoff to reduce flood risk and regulate water quality.
- Explore opportunities to create, enhance and restore priority habitats across the Bure Farmland Area, and strengthen **ecological connectivity** to the surrounding countryside, in line with the priorities identified by the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy. For example, this may include opportunities for buffering and connecting existing woodland to the west of Rackheath; or buffering existing wet grassland habitats at Crostwick Marsh (SSSI). This may also include opportunities to support specific species recovery.
- Explore opportunities to regenerate and enhance existing GI assets, and embed new GI features such as green roofs, sustainable drainage systems and street trees, into the into the North-East Norwich **Strategic Growth Area** to support urban greening.

Existing Strategic GI Assets

Recreational and healthy living GI assets

- **Walking and cycling routes** include, for example – parts of the Marriott's Way, a footpath, bridleway, and cycle route that runs between Aylsham and Norwich. At Aylsham Station, the Marriott's Way route becomes the Bure Valley Path, a nine mile footpath and cycle path running through to Hoveton and Wroxham. The path runs alongside the entire length of the narrow gauge Bure Valley Railway.
- **Recreational areas** include, for example golf courses such as Sprowston Manor Golf Club; and the South Walsham Fen Local Nature Reserve. The access land (which also has public footpaths) at Crostwick Common also provides countryside access.
- **Parks and green spaces** include a broad range of spaces with various functions, mostly on the periphery of or within settlements. These include parks and recreation grounds, such as Brundall Countryside Park, Balay Park - Buxton, and Aylsham Recreation Ground; churchyards such as St. Edmund's Church, Acle; and allotments such as at Coltishall.



St. Edmund's Church and Churchyard, Acle. © J Bass

Ecological and geological GI assets

- **Designated sites** include small parts of 8 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) - for example Crostwick Marsh SSSI. Most of the SSSIs only lie on the edge of the area as they fall predominantly within the Broads. Those sites on the edge of the area which are predominantly within the Broads are also mostly designated as Special Protection Areas/Ramsar and as The Broads Special Area of Conservation. The area also includes the South Walsham Fen Local Nature Reserve and 78 County Wildlife Sites.
- **Key habitats** include a range of habitats such as grassland and deciduous woodland, with coastal and floodplain grazing marsh along the corridor of the River Bure and its tributaries. There are also very occasional small pockets of heathland, such as at Abel Heath.



Abel Heath. © Evelyn Simak

Hydrological (water) GI assets

- **Operational catchments** – much of the Bure Farmland Area lies within the Bure Operational Catchment. The southwestern part of the area, around Great/Little Plumstead, Brundall and Strumpshaw lies in the Yare Operational Catchment.
- **Key waterways and features** include – the River Bure which flows southwards through the north of this area, from Aylsham to Coltishall where it joins the Broads. A number of smaller tributaries, such as the Stone Beck, drain into the Broads.

Further information can be found in the [Broadland Rivers Catchment Management Plan](#).



Buxton Mill and the River Bure. © South Norfolk Council

Heritage/cultural GI assets

- **Conservation areas** – parts of 17 Conservation Areas, covering the historic area of a number of settlements of various sizes, such as Aylsham and Salhouse, and including the extensive Blickling Estate.
- **Important historic buildings** - over 600 Statutory Listed Buildings (Grade I, II* and II) both within and outside of Conservation Areas. These include for example the grade I listed Blickling Hall, and the Church of St. Mary, Wroxham, as well as grade II* listed Little Hautbois Hall, near Buxton and the grade II listed Buxton Mill. These assets include churches, farmhouses, cottages and halls, illustrating the breath of local history in this area.
- **Registered historic parks and gardens** – grade II* listed Blickling Hall, an extensive area of 18th century parkland surrounding a 17th and 18th century formal garden with mid-19th century development, and further garden work in the 1930s, with a 17th century moated country house; and also grade II* listed Heydon Hall.
- **Scheduled monuments** – 10 No. including, for example Horsford Castle, St Faith Priory, and a Roman camp and settlement site west of Horstead.

Landscape Character Context

The Bure Farmland Area is a mixed farmland landscape. The dominant character type is Wooded Estatelands as identified in the Broadland District Landscape Character Assessment (Broadland District Council, 2013), which is a gently rolling landscape of predominantly arable farmland with numerous copses, woodlands and small plantations providing a sense of enclosure.

There is a settlement pattern of small manor houses, isolated halls and larger estates. Large historic halls are dominant landscape features, often with associated parkland and designed landscapes, which contrast with the adjacent farmed landscapes.

Plateau Farmland, Tributary Farmland and River Valleys also feature in this area with the Marshes Fringe adjoining the adjacent landscape of the Broads.

Landscape character types and areas identified within the Bure Farmland Area include:

Plateau Farmland

- C1 Foulsham and Reepham Plateau Farmland
- C2 Freethorpe Plateau Farmland

Wooded Estatelands

- E1 Blickling and Oulton Wooded Estatelands
- E2 Marham and Hainford Wooded Estatelands
- E3 Spixworth Wooded Estatelands
- E4 Rackheath and Salhouse Wooded Estatelands

River Valley

- A2 River Bure River Valley

Tributary Farmland

- D3 Coltishall Tributary Farmland
- D4 Blofield Tributary Farmland

Marshes Fringe

- F1 Wroxham to Rainworth Marshes Fringe
- F2 South Walsham to Reedham Marshes Fringe
- F3 Reedham to Thorpe Marshes Fringe

Guidance on local issues/opportunities for conserving and enhancing positive characteristics contributing to the sense of place/special qualities of this landscape character types/areas can be found in the Broadland District Landscape Character Assessment.



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