Norwich City Council Sustainable Development Panel

4th November 2025

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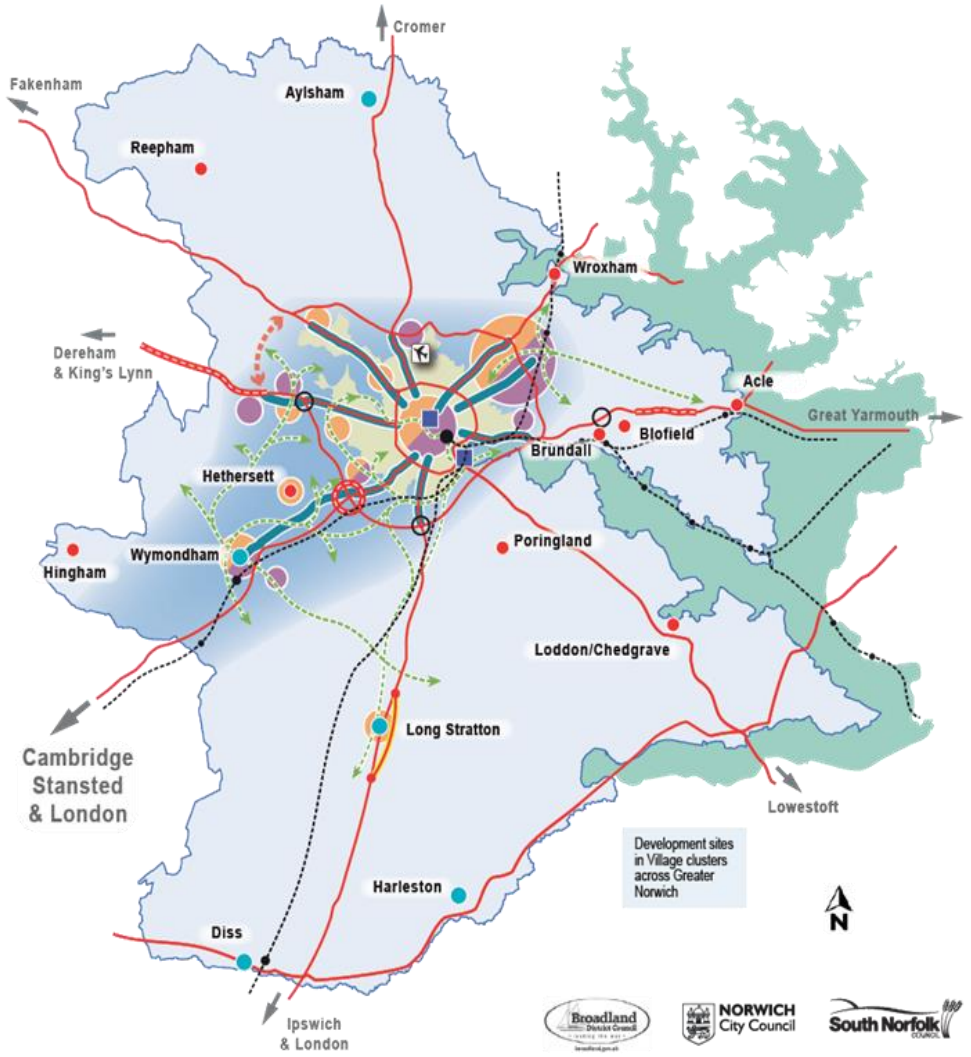
GNLP Review, Sub-regional planning and National Development Management Policies (NDMPs)

Drivers for GNLP Review (1)

- **Statutory Duty**
  A review of the GNLP's policies must take place within five years of adoption in March 2024.

- **Increased Housing Needs**
  New housing methodology raises Greater Norwich annual need by 34% from c 1,900 to **2,600 homes per year**, and across Norfolk from around 4,000 to 6,000 homes per year. Successive governments have required up-to-date local plans, including providing for enough homes to meet needs.

- **Policy and Process Reforms**
  National policy reforms emphasise **digital planning** and aligning growth with infrastructure delivery. **NDMPs** to be introduced – local plan focus now on strategy and allocations. Spatial Development Strategy (**SDS**) for Norfolk and Suffolk likely to be introduced.

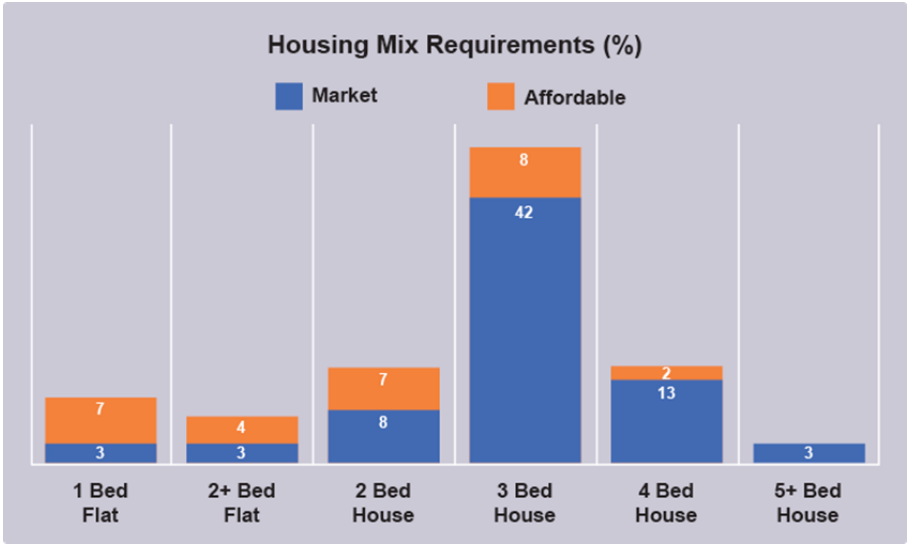


Drivers for GNLP Review (2)

- **Five-Year Supply**
  Current housing supply is 4.85 years
- **Adoption** likely by succeeding unitary/ies – 2029/30.

Jim McMahon, Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, written statement to the House of Commons, 3rd June 2025:

"…….. I continue to expect local planning authorities to work towards the adoption of an up-to-date local plan as soon as possible. Local Government Reorganisation should not hinder this essential work; and neither should the introduction of the new legal framework for local plan-making later this year, or our strategic planning reforms."



Early GNLP Workstreams

- **“Low Regrets” work identified, though partly dependent on government announcements.**
- **Spatial Data, Site Assessment and Evidence**
  Updating baseline data, conducting a Call for Sites, cross-boundary co-ordination and identifying required evidence updates are key early tasks.
- **Stakeholder Engagement**
  Early dialogue with elected members, communities, and developers to be supported by an engagement strategy.
- **Policy and Project Planning**
  Policy audits and **30-month** project planning to ensure alignment with new national policy.
- **Digital Capacity, Governance and the officer team**
  Transitioning to digitalisation of plan-making and use of GIS mapping, and improving governance to support agile decision-making, plan-progression and monitoring. Officer team being established.

Strategic Growth Overview

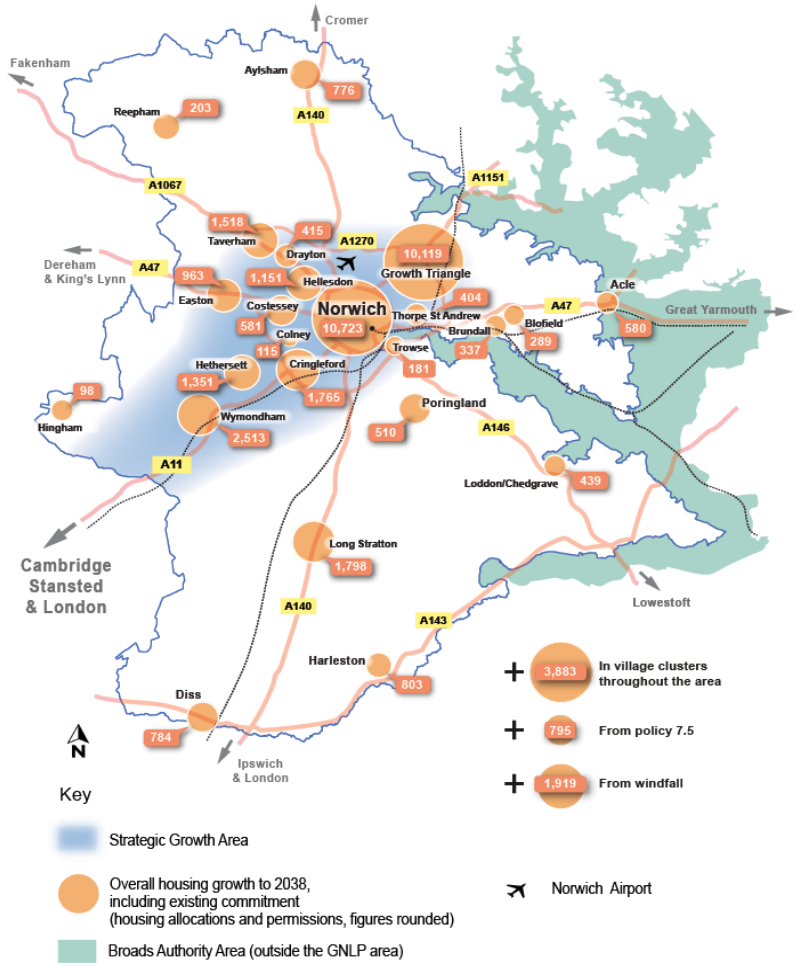
- **Revised National Policies**
  Excellent foundation through recently adopted strategy, but GNLP Review needs to plan for additional housing, employment and other sites and an updated strategy to meet growth goals + changes to national policies for 'growth driving' sectors (advanced manufacturing, creative industries, clean energy, digital technologies, professional and business services, life sciences and finance).

- **Infrastructure-First Planning**
  GNLP Review to ensure transport, utilities, education, + healthcare accompany development.

- **Environmental and Viability Assessment**
  Growth options evaluated for environmental, climate + biodiversity impact and deliverability.

- **Sustainable Spatial Strategies**
  Focus on balancing potential and options for urban intensification and extensions, expansion of main towns and key service centres, village sustainability and a new settlement or settlements.

Housing Growth Locations



A New Settlement or Settlements?

- **GNLP** para. 164 "*This plan identifies enough sustainable sites within and on the edge of settlements to meet currently assessed need for the plan period. A review of the local plan will need to assess options for longer term growth, including the potential for a sustainable new settlement or settlements*".

- **GNLP Review will extend the planning horizon to 2045 or 2060 if a new settlement or settlements are included.**

- In early 2025, South Norfolk Council submitted a site to the New Towns Taskforce for consideration for a new settlement – not among the chosen 12 **but could still be implemented through GNLP Review**.

- If allocated, delivery at a new settlement could start around 2035 possibly at around **300 homes p.a.** (based on Northstowe, Cambourne and Cranbrook), but 600 p.a. at Ebbsfleet (3 growth areas + stations (17 minutes to St. Pancras), 15,000 home target).

- **Context** – GNLP Review target is **2,590 homes** p.a. from 2025 to 2045

Call for Sites (likely early 2026)

Purpose of Call for Sites

Allows submission of land for consideration for a range of uses such as **housing** (including affordable housing, specialist housing and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation); **employment** and **commercial uses; mixed-uses; biodiversity net gain, green infrastructure** and **nutrient neutrality; renewable energy**, and **community + leisure** uses.

Submission Process

Detailed site maps, ownership details, proposed uses + constraints information required via online form.

Assessment and Evaluation

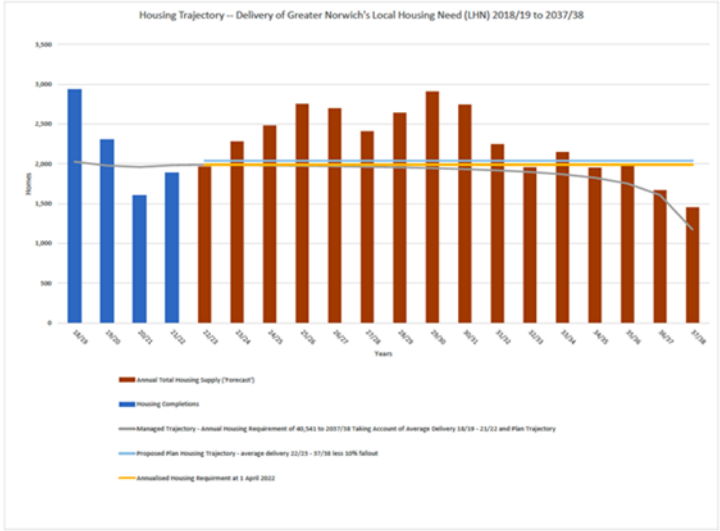
All sites to undergo initial then detailed assessments for suitability, availability, and deliverability before potential allocation – many more sites were submitted for the GNLP than were required.

Engagement and Transparency

Communications strategy will support awareness and transparency, targeting landowners, developers, and community groups.

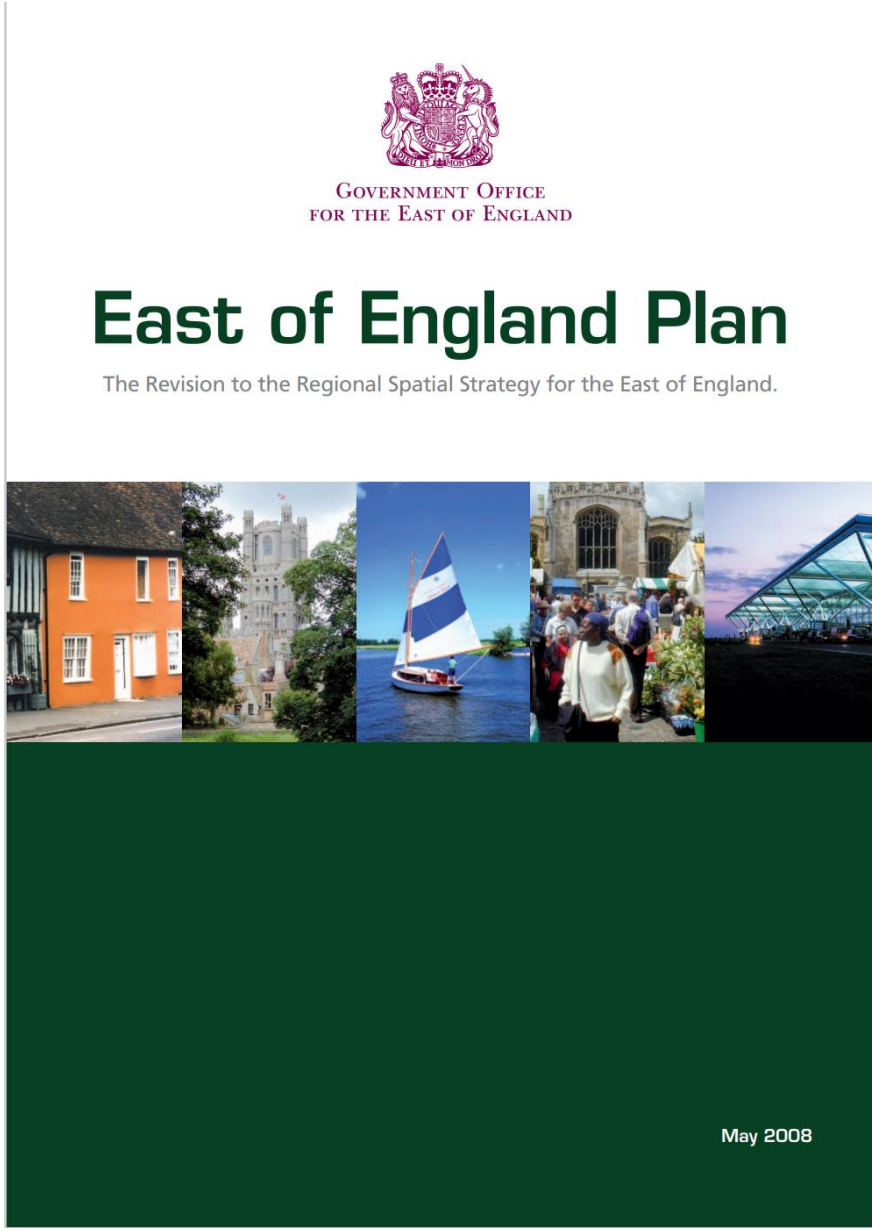
Timelines

- **Local Development Scheme (LDS)** March 2025 + GNDP meetings – **commitment to GNLP Review**
- **Scoping work** for the GNLP review began in October 2025.
- Project Initiation Document (PID) publication date dependent on **Regulations and supporting information from government** (likely December 2025)
- Adoption of the revised plan targeted under current LDS for March 2029 – possibly still **2029, or 2030?**



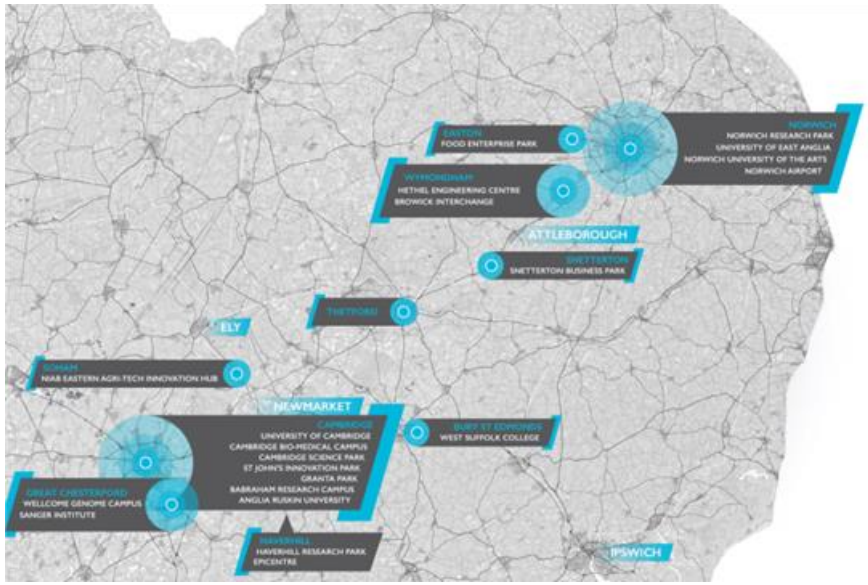
Norfolk and Suffolk SDS (1)

- **SDSs** in Planning and Infrastructure and English Devolution Bills.
- Return of **strategic planning** (Structure Plans, Regional Spatial Strategies (East of England Plan 2008 – 37.5k homes, 35k jobs for Greater Norwich, GI network, active travel etc).
- Replaced by much criticised **Duty to Cooperate** in 2011 Localism Act (D to C still in place currently).
- Duty to prepare SDS for **Mayoral Combined Authority**.
- Currently led by counties then mayoral authority – **district then unitary input (not responsibility).**



Norfolk and Suffolk SDS (2)

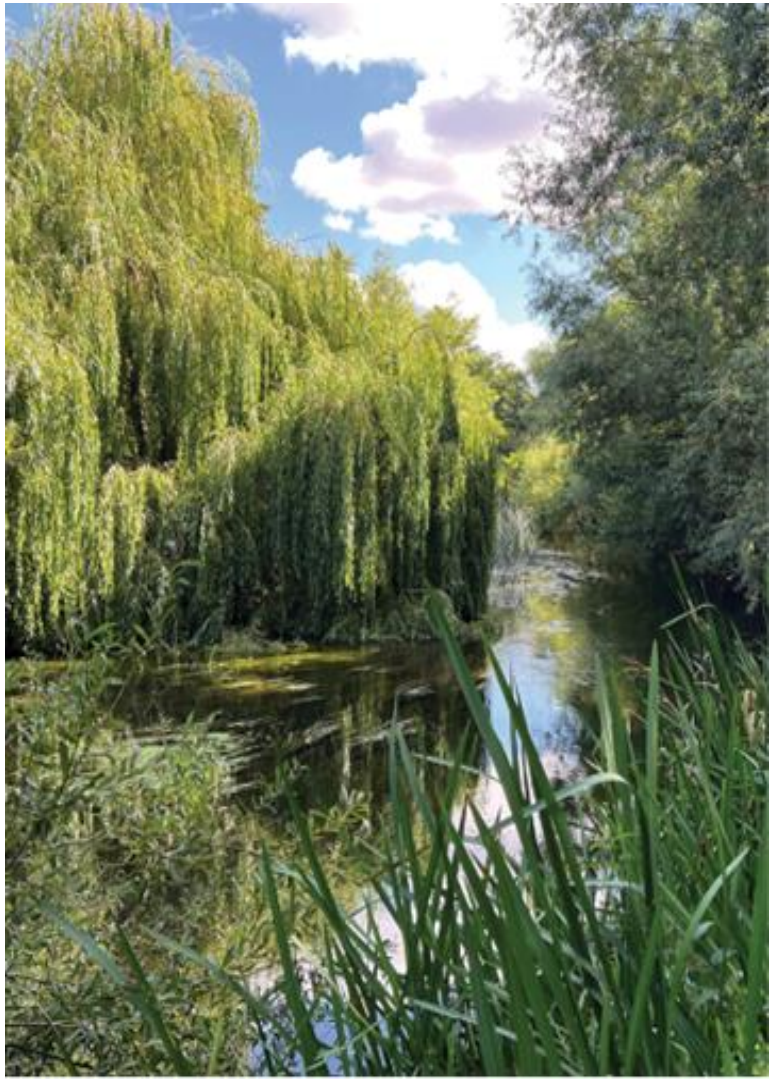
- Cover strategic cross boundary issues e.g. housing numbers, infrastructure needs, environmental protection and enhancement, transport corridors, employment growth.
- Set **strategic direction** local plans must follow, but **don't allocate sites**.
- Will replace Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF).
- Potential synergies in **evidence base** with GNLP and for other LPAs and preparatory workstreams being investigated.
- SDS adoption currently anticipated by **2029.**



National Development Management Policies (1)

- NDMPs introduced through the Levelling up Regeneration Act 2023
- **New** category of national policy that has statutory weight in decision-making (if conflict with local plans, NDMP have precedence)
- Consultation on draft NDMPs in December 2025?
- Aim to **streamline decision making** by reducing duplication in local plans

National Development Management Policies (2)

- Likely to cover:
  - design and amenity standards (space, privacy, noise)
  - heritage + conservation (listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeology, heritage assets)
  - flood risk + climate resilience
  - transport + highways (active travel, parking, access + connectivity)
  - environmental protection (BNG, trees, landscaping)
  - Housing (affordable housing, density, mix, accessibility)
  - Community Infrastructure (CIL/Section 106? education + health, open space)

- **Content and timing** will influence **GNLP Review** content + **whether local DM policies should be developed.**