

Where are we now?

1 The city of Norwich

Norwich past

Norwich has a history that few cities in the UK can rival, and although it is now a burgeoning business centre it has not lost any of its charm and unique character. Indeed, it stands as a compelling example of how the medieval and modern can exist in harmony, epitomised by the Forum and the neighbouring St Peter Mancroft Church.

Until the 18th century, Norwich was England's second city and as such occupies an important place in the country's history. At the time of the Norman Conquest it was one of the most important boroughs in the kingdom, and even boasted its own Mint. The Normans began building the castle in 1067 and the cathedral in 1096.

Richard I made Norwich a city in 1194, and in 1404 it was given the privilege of appointing a mayor, two sheriffs and 21 aldermen to run its own affairs. This self governance continued for almost 600 years until the County Borough was abolished in an overhaul of local government in 1974.

But while historic landmarks such as the castle and cathedral still dominate the landscape, it is not a city trapped in time but one which is changing fast and is on the cusp of exciting developments.

Norwich present

Norwich is a successful and growing economy and is the economic, social, cultural and environmental hub for the wider region (see the 'essential facts' on the next 2 pages). Greater Norwich has been awarded both Growth Point recognition and funding, and also Local Economic Growth Initiative (LEGI) support to bolster the local economic strategy. It has all the essential ingredients for economic success, including a world-renowned university, an international airport, improving transport infrastructure and a traditional charm, history and quality of life that major companies say is important to the people who work for them.

We have a large cluster of knowledge-based industries, such as financial services, health and life sciences, and creative industries, and more than 5,000 businesses and 50 national or regional headquarters are based here.

The city offers a diverse mix of shops, ranging from the vast complexes of Chapelfield and Castle Mall to small independent traders in the winding Norwich Lanes. As a result, it is now ranked in the top 10 of retail centres in the UK and best in the Eastern region. An estimated 20,000 – 25,000 people take advantage of the nightlife on offer on a weekend evening.

Justifiably, Norwich has an excellent reputation for further education and the University of East Anglia (UEA), City College Norwich and the Norwich School of Art and Design are important partners in the economic success of the city. However, mainstream education remains a real issue with attainment levels at all Key Stages 1–3 and GCSE below the national average and this is compounded by low levels of aspiration, low staying on levels and high levels of absence.

There are also concerning levels of deprivation which are concentrated in certain areas and mean many are not able to benefit from the city's successes. More than 30% of Norwich children are affected by income deprivation and Norwich has the highest proportion of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit recipients of all local authorities in the Eastern region. The importance of tackling these problems in key wards was recently recognised by the award of transitional funding under the working neighbourhoods fund.

A recent study of people based regeneration schemes undertaken on behalf of the City found that there were 10 key challenges still facing the City which needed to be addressed. These were:

- **Strong and Prosperous City**
 - Strengthening transition pathways from school into education or employment
 - Linking those with low skills to the labour market
 - Tackling wider worklessness
 - Addressing "in work" low income
- **Safe and Healthy neighbourhoods**
 - Tackling the additional barriers faced by people with mental health issues
 - Reducing health inequalities across the city
 - Reducing substance misuse levels
 - Lowering violent crime across the City
- **Putting people and culture at the heart of all we do**
 - Improving outcomes for children in low income and out of work households
 - Making best use of migration and population change

Norwich future

At present, the population of Greater Norwich is around 217,000 for the built-up area. However, significant growth is predicted, presenting challenging targets for new jobs and housing. By 2025 it is projected that Norwich's population will have risen to 280,000 and such growth must be strategically managed if we are to ensure this development is sustainable and shared equally for the benefit of all sections of our community.

There are more than 350,000 people in the Travel to Work area who rely on the city for work, leisure, shopping and onward transport links and 50,000 workers commute into the city each day. However, there needs to be a step change in the development of Norwich's economy, with greater emphasis on the jobs of the future in the 'knowledge economy', if we are to achieve the growth of 35,000 new jobs by 2021.

While there are a large number of professional jobs, there exists the potential to create more managerial and graduate level jobs. There are insufficient intermediate level jobs and openings here need to be encouraged. This will provide the opportunities for graduates to maximise their potential in the local jobs market and offer chances for those in lower paid employment to take a step up the ladder.

There are also a significant number of lower paid jobs in the city, which can tend to be filled by the indigenous city population. Vocational training is good, but there is a

need to develop this and generate new skills and aspirations to deliver a “locally grown” workforce that can support the emerging knowledge industries. Lifelong learning will also be important to ensure all local people can remain in the local work market if they desire.

One third of jobs in the city council area are based in just 66 organisations (200 or more employees) and a large number of these have international parent companies, making the local economy vulnerable to global investment decisions. This number of large employers also creates an 'employee culture' which provides a disincentive to people starting their own business.

Small businesses are under-represented in the city; micro businesses (1-10 employees) account for only 76% of businesses in Norwich compared to 84% nationally. Growth among small and medium sized enterprises is relatively poor. Business start-ups and self-employment levels are also low. The working age population of Norwich is 84,900 people, of which 62,000 are economically active (66%). In the two wards that incorporate Norwich city centre, 46,100 people are employed and across the whole city council area 93,172 work. This accounts for 25% of the total employment across Norfolk, whilst Greater Norwich accounts for 41% of all Norfolk Jobs.

Banking, finance and insurance account for 29,300 jobs, a far higher proportion than nationally. Distribution, hotels and restaurants provide 22,600 jobs (24.2%) while public administration, education and health meanwhile provide 19,800 jobs (21.3%). Manufacturing now accounts for about 8,100 employee jobs (8.7%).

In line with national trends, unemployment as a whole fell significantly between 1995 and 2002, but has since remained fairly steady. In March 2007 there were 2,952 people unemployed in the city council area, a rate of 3.5% compared with 2.6% in Norfolk and 2.7% nationally (unemployed as a percentage of resident working age population).

Norwich: the essential facts

Summary of the economic picture

- ☐ **Around 100,000 people work in the city council area**
- ☐ **42% of the jobs in the county are in the Greater Norwich area**
- ☐ **50,000 workers commute into the city each day**
- ☐ **Over 5,000 businesses and more than 50 national or regional HQs are based here**
- ☐ **Norwich has a high cluster of knowledge economies e.g. financial services, health and life sciences, and creative industries**
- ☐ **Improving transport infrastructure including Norwich international airport only 15 minutes from the city centre**
- ☐ **Home to the highly regarded University of East Anglia, City College Norwich and School of Art and Design**
- ☐ **Ranked as a top 10 retail centre in the UK and best in the Eastern region**
- ☐ **Ranked 8th best tourist destination in the UK.**

Summary of the social picture

- ☐ **Levels of socioeconomic deprivation are the second highest in the region, and 62nd (out of 354) in the country**
- ☐ **8 of the city council's 13 wards are in the 20% most deprived nationally**
- ☐ **Above average rates of homelessness**
- ☐ **26% of housing is council rented, compared to only 6% in Norfolk**

- ❑ Lower than national average educational attainment scores at all levels (Key Stages 2-4) and at GCSE
- ❑ Lower than national average rates of staying on to further education
- ❑ Higher than national average levels of young people in NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training)

Summary of the health picture

- ❑ The health picture overall for Norwich is mixed with life expectancy overall similar to the national average
- ❑ But this masks huge differences within the city, for example a difference of 7.4 years between people in the healthiest and least healthy wards
- ❑ Above average health issues include teenage pregnancy, road deaths and injuries, mental health problems and drug and alcohol misuse
- ❑ Lower children's population, higher than average young people's population (16-24), and lower than average older population (above 75).

Summary of the cultural and environmental picture

- ❑ 5 theatres, including the Theatre Royal the most successful regional theatre in the UK
- ❑ 3 regional media centres (BBC, Anglia and Archant)
- ❑ High profile arts calendar including the Norfolk & Norwich Festival, and Contemporary Art Norwich
- ❑ Highly regarded arts institutions including Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, and the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts
- ❑ Over 1500 buildings of historical significance
- ❑ 35% of the city council area is public open space
- ❑ More Park & Ride sites (6) than any other UK city
- ❑ Home to major climate change and carbon reduction initiatives

2. Norwich City Council

Our improvement journey

In 2003, Norwich City Council was judged as a “fair” council by the independent Audit Commission, as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of all local authorities. Since then, it has begun a major improvement journey. During this period, significant progress has been made in a number of performance areas, but other areas for improvement have also arisen.

The early part of the improvement journey was built around the innovative “Norwich Connect” partnership with Steria Ltd. This partnership has invested significant monies into new technology, and the streamlining of customer facing services. This has led to major improvements in customer responsiveness, and significant efficiencies in the region of £2.8m per year. The partnership is now attracting national attention from other local authorities.

Our Aiming for Excellence improvement programme has also delivered major changes such as:

- A clear vision for the city, and for the City Council
- An improved performance management framework
- Clearer priorities and target-setting
- Increased management capacity
- Increased staff and customer satisfaction

- Improving customer satisfaction
- New financial management arrangements.

In early 2008 we commissioned an independent peer review of our progress. The review noted the significant progress achieved since 2003 - "*the peer review team congratulate NCC on the improvement since 2003 and believe that by further harnessing the motivation, drive & determination that exists in the Council it will be able to continue to succeed*". Annex 5 summarises the recommendations, and this plan prioritises how we will be addressing these issues.

How we have performed – good progress since the 2007/08 Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan 2007/08 set out the City Council's vision and strategic and short term priorities. CMT, Scrutiny and the Executive have all received quarterly reports setting out progress against the key priorities and performance targets set out in the corporate plan. The Performance Management Improvement Board (PMIB), which was established during the year to drive performance improvement, has taken the leading role in monitoring progress and initiating corrective action where performance has slipped.

Annex 1 sets out the detailed results against all statutory Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs). Overall the City Council showed progress with 62% of BVPIs being the same or better than the previous year (2006/07).

There have been some notable areas of achievement:

Strong & prosperous city

- Significant progress made in achieving our ambition to obtain Unitary Status
- Independent research shows a positive direction of travel on our finance improvement programme
- Good progress on planning the growth and development of the city, and completion of a number of key projects (e.g. Barrack Street and St Andrews Plain)
- Completion of a draft environmental strategy, and acceptance onto the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme to reduce its carbon footprint
- Procurement savings of £60k, with an additional £200k planned for 2008/09
- More conservation areas with an up to date character appraisal
- More council buildings accessible by people with disabilities
- 100% of our targets have been achieved in relation to roads maintenance.

Safe and healthy neighbourhoods

- Reduced overall levels of crime over the last 4 years
- Faster re-let times for empty council properties
- Better rent collection rates and lower rent arrears
- A silver award in the International Liveable Cities competition
- Savings of over £2 million in Landlord Services, which has been partly re-invested in an acceleration of the window replacement programme
- Top quartile performance for the removal of abandoned vehicle within 24 hours
- Reduced numbers of non decent homes
- Improved performance in getting non local authority homes re-occupied
- Better performance in offering homelessness advice and intervention

- Reduced levels of domestic burglaries, violent crime, vehicle crime and robberies.

Putting people and culture at the heart of all we do

- A successful Norfolk and Norwich Festival 2007/08
- Increased visitor numbers to Norwich museums
- City of Norwich Partnership conference focus on cultural planning
- £2m of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding invested into poorer parts of the city
- Achieved £1.2m of local Enterprise growth funding for smaller businesses in the city
- High levels of satisfaction are reported for parks and open spaces, museums and galleries and theatres and concert halls
- 25% reduction in city road casualties in the city
- 100% delivery of food premises inspections
- Improved percentage of phone calls successfully handled in the customer contact team, with answer delay times reduced.

How we have performed – areas for improvement

Overall, progress against the majority of priorities has been good. Key areas for attention in 2008/09 will need to be

- Continued focus on improving our financial systems and processes
- a stronger focus on environmental sustainability
- a greater emphasis on and tackling deprivation is needed in 2008/09
- closer attention to performance against statutory Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's).

The Performance Management & Improvement Board (PMIB) will be focussing on these areas, and developing improvement plans in all priority areas.

Much of the councils operational improvement work is delivered through a comprehensive set of service plans, which set out a large range of more detailed improvement targets. Progress against service plan targets was good, with 72% on or ahead of target, 27% experiencing some minor slippage and only 1 % not likely to be achieved.

How we have performed - progress against political priorities 2007/08

The council also adopted five political priorities for 2007/08. Progress has been good and is summarised below;

- Invest in more CCTV cameras
 - 11 additional cameras provided in residential areas
 - 7 additional cameras in non residential areas
- Improved recycling rate
 - Phase 1 of alternate weekly collections implemented with second phase to start in June

- 22% target now exceeded and continuing to improve – 25.9% achieved in the last 6 months of the year. We aim to achieve 32% by 2010.
- Successful trial for Green waste collections implemented in Crome and Eaton wards with planned extension to all residents in the coming year.
- Introduce park rangers
 - submission to Big Lottery Fund complete
 - Scheme launched at Gildencroft with Wardens, Parks & Open Spaces staff and City Care
 - Wardens now visible in parks
- 1000 new affordable homes by 2009
 - 293 completed in 2006/07
 - 279 completed in 2007/08
 - Government consent received to access £60m grant for new affordable homes and we are now exploring potential for a 'special purpose vehicle' to deliver these
- Start work on Memorial Gardens by 31/03/08
 - Project team formed and preparatory work underway
 - Work on site now commenced

How we have performed - staff survey results

Our staff are an important barometer of how well we are performing – many of them are local residents too. We have undertaken staff surveys in 2006 & 2007 to help us identify key areas of strength and areas for improvement as identified by staff.

We have achieved a response rate of 72% for these which far exceeds the local government average response rate, which is partly driven by the belief that the results of the survey will be acted upon. The 2007 survey showed significant improvement in most areas over the previous survey demonstrating a positive direction of travel. Key strengths identified were that:

- 91% of staff were happy to go the extra mile at work when required
- Most staff were clear about expectations in their job
- 82% of staff had received an appraisal (up from 25% the previous year)
- 72% of staff felt they had a good work/life balance
- Equalities and diversity issues scored strongly
- Most staff agreed that they worked in co-operative team environment.

However, there were areas for improvement and we are addressing these through an action plan which forms part of our improvement programme. Some of these areas were:

- Visibility of senior management and change management
- Communication
- Only 20% of staff believe they have reached their full potential
- Resourcing and staff levels were seen as an issue by about ¾ of staff.

The political and managerial leadership see the importance of both responding to these surveys and of recognising and valuing the hard work of staff and the great effort that has been made to help the authority achieve its vision and ambitions. Staff roadshows have been introduced as well as staff recognition schemes – see Appendix 4.

How we have performed – public consultation

In 2007/08, Norwich City Council involved the people of Norwich and other stakeholders in over 30 different consultations. We use these surveys to improve service design and delivery. Summarised below are some of the key messages:

Community Safety Strategic Assessment public consultation

A cross section of the public was asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the emerging priorities of the Safer Norwich Partnership. A high level of agreement with the priorities was shown:

- To reduce the incidents of anti-social behaviour - 98%
- To reduce the level of criminal damage - 97%
- To reduce the levels of violent crime(including domestic violence) - 97%
- To reduce the adverse affects of alcohol and drug misuse on communities – 100%
- To reduce the adverse effects of prolific & priority offenders on communities - 97%

Open Spaces Needs Assessment Community Survey

A wide ranging consultation exercise was undertaken, comprising a household survey, schools questionnaire, workshops and topic discussions, involving sport, green spaces and community groups. Key general points raised:

- High local importance for the provision of a range of open spaces and facilities.
- The value of both informal and formal open spaces
- Concern about the quality of some facilities
- The need when planning for all types of recreation opportunity to take into account people's preparedness to travel, and requirement for different types of space.

Employment Growth Study – views of senior managers in Norwich businesses

The key issues for economic development in the City were identified as:

- Better promotion of Norwich's strengths
- Supporting economic diversity
- Closer working between businesses in different sectors
- Improved road and rail links to other cities
- Provision of appropriate employment sites and premises
- Need to improve skills of local people
- Support for enterprise and entrepreneurship

Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) Joint Core Strategy:

- 81% of respondents agree with the draft vision for the area
- 79% of respondents agree with the way the GNDP proposes to manage the growth of the Norwich area

Customer Contact Team – Customer Satisfaction Survey, autumn 2007

- 79% thought that the service was either excellent or good.
- 41% think that we should extend our front counter opening time
- 31% think that we should extend our telephone contact hours.

3 The Local Government climate

The climate for all local authorities continues to be extremely demanding. Looking forward, there are a range of key external constraints and pressures that will impact on Norwich City Council's ability to deliver local services over the next few years. We will need to take these into account in planning and delivering services. Some of the key pressures include:

- **Financial pressures** – Government grant settlements are expected to be below the level of inflation. In particular the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 (CSR 2007), required local government to reduce its spending and to deliver further efficiency savings
- **Efficiency and modernisation** – all local authorities are required to deliver 3% efficiency gains above and beyond their normal business. Norwich City Council has achieved this, and at the same time has managed to make significant investments in new technology and systems to improve customer responsiveness and service delivery
- **Unitary status** – a boundary review for the whole of Norwich and Norfolk is now underway and an outline conceptual business case has been submitted for the new authority. New unitary councils are likely to come into place by April 2010
- **Growing demand** – demand for our services continues to grow. The city of Norwich is expected to grow by approximately 70,000 people over the next 20 years, meaning more visitors, more workers and more residents that we will need to care for. This places growing pressures on our very tight resources
- **The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act** - requires all local authorities to make major changes to the way they work, and to start working more closely with local communities and people, and to work more closely with each other. This will mean we need to review all of our services, and start delivering them more closely to local people
- **Other new legislation** – there will be a wide range of new responsibilities emerging for local authorities and most of these will come without any additional resources.

These significant pressures, and many more, will mean that we will need to continue to identify efficiencies across all services so that we can meet growing and new needs. It also means that we will need to focus our attention on helping the most needy and disadvantaged, and target our resources increasingly on the highest priority areas and services.