



NORWICH City Council

Committee name: Cabinet

Committee date: 11/02/2026

Report title: Greater Norwich Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2026-2031

Portfolio: Councillor Stonard, Leader of the council

Report from: Head of planning and regulatory services

Wards: All wards

KEY DECISION

Purpose

To consider the draft Greater Norwich Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2026-2031.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Cabinet approve the draft Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2026-2031 (see appendix A) which includes:

- The proposed 2026/27 Annual Growth Programme (AGP), noting that the AGP contains projects at Woodrow Pilling Park and Yare Valley Walk UEA Boardwalk and that the allocation of funding for these projects is subject to the approval of the Council's capital programme by Cabinet and subsequently Council in the associated budget papers.
- The proposed use of the remaining £25.5m reduced-cost City Deal Borrowing, which is set to expire at the end of March 2026

Policy framework

The council has five corporate priorities, which are:

- A prosperous Norwich.
- A fairer Norwich.
- A climate responsive Norwich.
- A future-proof Norwich.
- An open and modern council.

This report meets the corporate priorities for a prosperous Norwich, a fairer Norwich and a climate responsive Norwich and helps to fulfil the strategic planning policies in the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

Report details

Background

1. In 2013, Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council together with Norfolk County Council signed a City Deal with Government. The City Deal agreed a strategic infrastructure programme which would be supported by access to reduced cost borrowing, and the local authorities made a commitment to pool a significant proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income to form an Infrastructure Investment Fund (IIF).
2. The Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) was then established, which has responsibility for managing the IIF and to assemble the Annual Growth Programme from the Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan.
3. The development of this Plan is informed by the updated [Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan 2025, which is published in a digital format on the GNGB website here](#). The partner authorities contribute to the annual update of the Greater Norwich Infrastructure Plan, which includes reviewing the list of infrastructure projects that have been identified as required to support the growth within the area. To ensure the list remains current City Council officers review the status of infrastructure projects that have been endorsed through the adoption of corporate strategies.
4. The GNGB agreed at its meeting on 24 March 2016 to produce an annual Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan (5YIIP- referred to herein as “the Plan,” attached as Appendix A). The Plan is prepared to provide a longer term, more strategic context for infrastructure decision making as well as eliminating the need to approve individual projects at partner Cabinets more than once a year (subject to the GNGB not recommending any substantial changes to the Programme).
5. The projects identified within the Plan are those currently considered to be a priority for delivery to assist in achieving the economic growth targets set out in the Greater Norwich Local Plan and the Greater Norwich City Deal; one of the key strands of the City Deal was the delivery of an infrastructure programme facilitated by a pooled funding arrangement between the authorities.
6. Income received from CIL is pooled within the IIF and allocated to infrastructure projects forming the Greater Norwich Growth Programme, which is administered by the GNGB.
7. The new projects which have been recommended to receive IIF funding during the forthcoming financial year (the first of the planned five years) are proposed to be adopted as the 2026/27 Annual Growth Programme (AGP).
8. The Plan provides an update of the financial status of the IIF and therefore is an important evidence base to support decision making for new allocations. It also includes information which each charging authority is legally required to report on CIL spend on an annual basis.
9. As the IIF has matured, the scope of how the fund supports the delivery of infrastructure within the Plan has broadened. There are now a variety of ways

in which funding can be allocated to projects, all of which are explained within the Plan.

Draft Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2026-2031

10. The Plan was considered by the Greater Norwich Growth Board at their public meeting on 11 December 2025 and is now being recommended for approval to each partner district council. The Plan, along with the confirmed Annual Growth Programme for 2026/27 will then return to the GNGB at their meeting on 12 March 2026 for final agreement and commitment of funds.
11. The Plan incorporates the updated position on infrastructure delivery, includes revised CIL income forecasts, and provides updates on projects accepted within previous AGPs. The plan is split into five chapters.
12. Chapter 1, Context - introduces the work of the GNGB, and details how the Plan is developed, and provides information around the long-term strategic planning for Greater Norwich.
13. Chapter 2, The Infrastructure Investment Fund - provides an overview of what the IIF is, its eligibility criteria, and the different mechanisms the GNGB uses to fund and deliver infrastructure using the IIF.
14. Chapter 3, New Allocations - details the projects which are being proposed within the 2026/27 Annual Growth Programme and which, if agreed, will receive IIF funding to support their delivery in the forthcoming financial year. It also presents the proposed use of the remaining City Deal Borrowing. The Annual Growth Programme includes a project in Train Wood that was sponsored by Norfolk County Council and two projects that were sponsored by Norwich City Council:
 - a. Woodrow Pilling Park – a £422,091 contribution to a project that will deliver a range of improvements to Woodrow Pilling Park, located in Crome Ward in the east of Norwich. The investment will enhance access to the green infrastructure corridor, including links to Lion Wood, and encourage greater use of the park by the local community. It will improve opportunities for play, exercise, and active travel, while enhancing the overall feel and functionality of the space. Works will include: a new multi station outdoor gym, a 100m sprint track, table tennis tables and a teqball table, enhancements to the pump track (a type of BMX track), installation of accessible play equipment, a new accessible footpath connecting to Lion Wood, installation of signage and cycle facilities, and biodiversity improvements. Additional future works may include car park improvements and enhancements to the site entrances.
 - b. Yare Valley Walk UEA Boardwalk – a £260,899 contribution to a project that will install a new, much improved boardwalk on a highly popular route between the River Yare and UEA Broad, connecting Cringleford and Eaton with the University of East Anglia. These enhancements will reopen a key green corridor in a high growth area and create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for its many community users. Works will include a new 400m boardwalk made from recycled composite plastic material, improved accessibility with an increased path width from 1m to 1.5m wherever possible, installation of passing places

every 100m, replacement of existing bridges which connect the boardwalk to the path at either end with two culverts, access improvements to the dipping pond and installation of additional signage and benches.

15. Chapter 4, Previous Allocations - provides a financial overview and drawdown timeframe for each project which has been allocated funding from the IIF since its establishment. This is referred to as the Full Growth Programme with all projects listed by their Growth Programme (GP) number. This information is required to be reported on an annual basis by legislation. It also details how other funding pathways have been utilised, such as borrowing and match funding.
16. Chapter 5, Delivery Updates - provides delivery updates for projects that have received funding in previous years and are currently underway.
17. The Plan is included as appendix A.

City Deal Borrowing

18. As part of the Greater Norwich City Deal agreement signed with Government in 2013, the GNGB were granted the opportunity to access lower-cost loan funding from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). The reduced rate is a discount of 0.4% below the published PWLB interest rates, instead of the 0.2% discount that all local authorities are offered for borrowing. The City Deal was agreed against the growth targets as set in the Joint Core Strategy. This runs until March 2026 and is the deadline for any City Deal borrowing to be drawn.
19. A total of £80m borrowing was agreed to be allocated in this way:
 - £60m for strategic infrastructure investment:
 - £40m for the Broadland Northway (previously known as the NDR)
 - £10m for the Long Stratton Bypass
 - £10m for Central Norwich road network schemes
 - £20m to establish a Local Infrastructure Fund (LIF): a revolving loans fund.
20. Of the £60m strategic infrastructure borrowing available, a total of £50m has been borrowed. £40m was borrowed for the Broadland Northway in 2016/17 and £10m for Long Stratton Bypass in 2024/25. £10m, previously earmarked for Central Norwich road network schemes, remains to be borrowed.
21. The Greater Norwich administrative arrangements initially set up to draw the £20m LIF were brought to a close in 2020 following a review. This was agreed to be replaced by a new loan model in September 2023, a cyclical fund that can be used to support local infrastructure projects, as originally intended within the City Deal. This new fund model is called the City Deal Loans Fund (CDLF). A £4.5 million loan was drawn down in 2025/26 to forward fund the developer contribution for Long Stratton Bypass. £15.5m allocated within the CDLF remains to be borrowed.
22. In July 2025, a request was sent to His Majesty's Treasury to extend the City Deal borrowing deadline from March 2026 to March 2038, in line with the newly adopted Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP), which extends the joint planning

period to 2038. The request included an explanation of why the full borrowing allocation had not been used within the original timeframe and outlined the opportunities that an extension would unlock. Unfortunately, the extension was not agreed.

23. At an informal GNGB meeting on Wednesday 15 October 2025 board members unanimously agreed to explore alternative ways to utilise the remaining £25.5m of City Deal borrowing, before the March 2026 deadline. From the options presented they agreed to progress with the following: “to reallocate some existing IIF Commitments to borrowing & to offer what remains to the partners to utilise themselves.”
24. The reallocation of existing IIF commitments to borrowing involves reviewing projects that have already secured IIF ‘cash’ allocations in the form of direct funding. The board agreed to explore the option of converting some of these allocations to borrowing instead. This reallocation within the IIF would help smooth expenditure over a longer period, which is beneficial, particularly as income into the IIF is expected to remain low in the short term. This approach would increase cash flow into the fund in the short term, enabling more projects to be funded in 2026/27 and beyond.
25. In order for a project to be eligible for this funding option, it must either already be onsite or be about to commence onsite delivery. This is essential to justify both the need and the cost of borrowing, as the borrowing must support project delivery before it expires at the end of March 2026.
26. Following a review of the current funded programme two projects are recommended to be financed in this way. The Greater Norwich Growth Board are recommending borrowing £7 million to support the delivery of Long Stratton Bypass (£2m) and Hethel Technology Park (£5m). This borrowing would be repaid from the IIF.
27. Committing City Deal borrowing to these projects would enable the GNGB to release their existing Growth Programme allocations, allowing £7 million of IIF funding to be made available to other projects. This would significantly enhance the fund’s capacity to support new applications from 2026 onwards.
28. This would then leave the remaining borrowing to be utilised by any of the partners. Discussions with each authority’s leader and s151 officer has confirmed that Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council, and Broadland District Council have no current use for the borrowing. Therefore, it is proposed that Norfolk County Council should utilise the remaining £18.5m of borrowing flexibly within their existing borrowing requirements. This borrowing would be repaid by Norfolk County Council.
29. Norfolk County Council has indicated a total borrowing need of £50m by March 2026, but any amount borrowed through the City Deal agreement will be ringfenced to support the delivery of infrastructure projects within the Greater Norwich area. These could include, but are not limited to, capital projects being delivered within the ‘Transport for Norwich’ or Schools capital programmes.
30. The Plan provides further details of these proposed loans set against all other financial commitments. Progressing with this recommendation leads to a

forecast that approximately £10.5 m of uncommitted funds will remain within the IIF at the end of 26/27. If the £7m of borrowing was not utilised and instead the two projects continue to be funded directly from the IIF, this forecast would drop to approximately £4m of uncommitted funds.

31. While £4m may appear substantial, in the context of the overall infrastructure programme it is relatively modest. In fact, it would represent the lowest year-end balance held since 2017/18, when the fund was still in its early stages. This reduced balance would also severely limit the ability to make new allocations to projects in future years—particularly in 2027/28 and 2028/29—when income into the IIF is expected to remain well below levels seen in previous years.

Data dashboard

32. [A digital dashboard has been developed, presenting the financial information contained in the Plan.](#) It provides an interactive and more accessible platform for readers to be able to explore the financial data more easily. Please note it does not contain all the detail and context so should be viewed alongside the Plan to ensure full understanding.

Greater Norwich Annual Growth Programme (AGP)

Each year, a new group of projects receive funding from the Infrastructure Investment Fund (IIF) and are called the Annual Growth Programme (AGP). This table shows all the projects that have received funding since the fund was established in 2014/2015. Click on the authority logos or select from the drop down menus to filter the projects by different factors. Please note that multiple factors can be selected at once using the 'Ctrl' button.

Greater Norwich Growth Board

Growth Programme

Growth Programme Overview

Match Funding

Loans

CIL Forecast

Planned Spend

IIF Balance

Lead Authority Partner

Infrastructure Theme All

District Location All

AGP Year All

Project Status All

AGP Year	Ref	Lead Authority Partner	Project Name	Infrastructure Theme	Project Status	Project Budget	Other Funding	IIF Funding	Spend to 2025/26
2026/27	GP122	County	Salhouse Primary Extension	Education	Not Started	£2,500,000	£0	£2,500,000	£0
2026/27	GP121	Norwich	Yare Valley Walk - UEA Boardwalk	Green Infrastructure	Not Started	£439,708	£178,809	£260,899	£0
2026/27	GP120	Norwich	Woodrow Pilling Park	Green Infrastructure	Not Started	£452,731	£30,640	£422,091	£0
2026/27	GP119	County	Train Wood	Green Infrastructure	Not Started	£869,191	£280,448	£588,743	£0
2026/27	GP118	Broadland	The Nest - Padel Courts	Community	Not Started	£510,800	£360,800	£150,000	£0
2026/27	GP117	South Norfolk	Framingham Earl Sports Centre	Community	Not Started	£4,300,000	£3,200,000	£1,100,000	£0
2026/27	GP116	Broadland	Blofield Park Community Hub	Community	Not Started	£1,611,952	£1,111,952	£500,000	£0
2025/26	GP115	County	School of Oral Health	Education	Ongoing	£10,300,000	£8,800,000	£1,500,000	£1,500,000
2025/26	GP114	South Norfolk	Wymondham Baptist Community	Community	Ongoing	£589,999	£339,999	£250,000	£250,000
Total						£148,993,763	£105,795,013	£43,198,751	£33,692,416

Clear Filters

Neighbourhood CIL

33. 15% of overall CIL receipts in Norwich City Council's area are retained within the district for allocation to community projects. This is called neighbourhood CIL. Based on process changes previously approved by Cabinet, decisions on spending are made during the year by a cross-council officer board based on the scoring criteria that were previously agreed by Cabinet.

34. There was £207k neighbourhood CIL unspent at 31 March 2025 and a further £73k has been received in 2025/26 up to 9 January 2026, making a total of £280k.

35. In 2025/26, we anticipate spending up to £79k of neighbourhood CIL on the following projects, :

- £58,623 to Norwich Unity Hub for the development and operation of Carrow House as a charity & social enterprise hub.
- Up to £20,000 through Pledge Norwich – a match-funding pot for small community-led projects. This funding pot remains open and we are expecting more applications before the financial year end. Projects funded so far through this scheme are:
 - £4,000 to New Routes Integration to support vulnerable communities
 - £1,925 to NR2 Skillshare to run art classes in one of our reducing inequality target areas.

36. There is a forecasted 2025/26 year-end balance of £201k once the forecast spend of £79k has been deducted from the forecasted available funds of £280k. This will be carried forward into 2026/27 and available for allocation to projects. There is a commitment to provide £117k to Norwich Unity Hub across 2026/27 and 2027/28. It is also our intention to allocate £20k in 2026/27 to continue keeping the Pledge Norwich funding available to smaller community organisations, leaving £64k uncommitted. This will be considered alongside forecast income to keep neighbourhood CIL funding at effective levels over the coming years.

Consultation

37. There has been no public consultation on the content of the Plan itself. Project sponsors are responsible for ensuring consultation takes place on individual projects.

Implications

Financial and resources

38. Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the council's stated priorities, as set out in its community-led plan "We are Norwich" and budget. There are no proposals in this report that would reduce or increase resources. The 2026/27 budget reports to Cabinet and subsequently Full Council includes a financial provision within the capital programme for the Woodrow Pilling Park and Yare Valley Walk UEA Boardwalk projects.

39. The financial status of the Infrastructure Investment Fund is explained within the Plan.

40. The Greater Norwich Growth Programme requires continuous monitoring and reporting, which will be undertaken by the existing resource of the Greater Norwich Projects Team hosted by Norfolk County Council.

41. Resource for the delivery of each project within the programme will be the responsibility of the individual project manager and sponsor.

Legal

42. The IIF pooling arrangements and the designation of an Accountable Body are set out in the Joint Working Agreement which was agreed by all partners and signed on 26 September 2014 and is supported by the Infrastructure Investment Fund Programme Governance.

43. In relation to the City Deal Borrowing Norfolk County Council, acting as the Accountable Body, will borrow a total of £7m from the Public Works Loan Board to support the delivery of Long Stratton Bypass and Hethel Technology Hub. These loans will be secured by a legal agreement confirming that loan repayments will be made from the Infrastructure Investment Fund. All partners must sign this agreement within two weeks of the loan being drawn down. This agreement follows the same format as previous borrowing arrangements and will be added as a new schedule to the existing legal agreement titled '*Partner Drawdown and Borrowing Authorisations*', originally signed by all partners in October 2015.
44. Separately, Norfolk County Council will draw down £18.5 million from the Public Works Loan Board. This loan will solely be the responsibility of the County Council, and Greater Norwich has no obligation to contribute to its repayment.
45. The Yare Valley Walk UEA Boardwalk project will be implemented by the UEA but Norwich City Council, as the sponsoring body, will be accountable to the GNGB for the fulfilment of the grant conditions, including adherence to subsidy control rules. Norwich City Council will have a legal agreement with the UEA, drawn up by nplaw, through which the conditions and liabilities arising from accepting the GNGB grant will be transferred from Norwich City Council to the UEA.

Statutory considerations

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Equality and diversity	No specific issues arise from the funding of the Growth Programme. Individual project issues are the responsibility of the project manager and sponsor. The Woodrow Pilling Park and Yare Valley Walk UEA Boardwalk projects have key objectives to improve accessibility.
Health, social and economic impact	The funding of the Growth Programme is intended to contribute to the provision of infrastructure that supports the development identified in the Greater Norwich Local Plan. Individual project issues are the responsibility of the project manager and sponsor. In the case of Norwich City Council, this relates to the Woodrow Pilling Park and Yare Valley Walk UEA Boardwalk projects which will enable more people to use these open spaces, thereby boosting their health and wellbeing
Crime and disorder	No specific issues arise from the funding of the Growth Programme. Individual project issues are the responsibility of the project manager and sponsor. In the case of Norwich City Council, this relates to the Woodrow Pilling Park and Yare Valley Walk UEA Boardwalk projects, but no crime and disorder impacts have been identified.
Children and adults safeguarding	No specific issues arise from the funding of the Growth Programme. Individual project issues are the responsibility of the project manager and sponsor. No safeguarding impacts have been identified in relation to the Woodrow Pilling Park and Yare Valley Walk UEA Boardwalk projects.

Consideration	Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:
Environmental impact	Project managers and sponsors will be required to meet their own environmental obligations. The Woodrow Pilling Park and Yare Valley Walk UEA Boardwalk projects will encourage physical activity through play and increased walking and the UEA project will be carefully designed to fit into its sensitive landscape using durable materials that require minimal maintenance to avoid future disturbance.

Risk management

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
Overrunning project cost and programme	Additional cost or lengthier programmes only carry a risk for Norwich City Council in relation to those projects within the City Council's capital programme. The Council would be obliged to either curtail the scope of the projects or obtain additional funds.	<p>The risks related to project cost and delivery remain with the project manager and sponsor. The management of the projects will be monitored by the Council's Capital Working Group and Capital Board.</p> <p>All new projects are asked to sign an Infrastructure Investment Fund grant offer letter. This letter outlines any project-specific risks and includes conditions to manage them. Risks of fulfilling those conditions are evaluated at the point when the grant offer is formally made.</p> <p>IIF funding is drawn down in arrears, meaning funds are claimed after eligible expenditure has been incurred and evidenced.</p>

Risk	Consequence	Controls required
<p>Lack of funds within the Infrastructure Investment Fund to make interest and loan repayments in the medium to long term.</p>	<p>The legal and financial responsibility for the City Deal loans ultimately rests with Norfolk County Council, acting as the Accountable Body for the GNGB.</p> <p>If the fund ran out of money the Greater Norwich Growth Board partners would be expected to work together to establish how to cover any shortfall.</p>	<p>The Plan provides an annual financial update. Any new funding allocations are only approved after all financial commitments have been reviewed and accounted for. This ensures that decisions are made within the context of the overall financial position of the IIF.</p> <p>This risk is mitigated through the agreed governance arrangements, plus the monitoring and reporting processes as agreed by the GNGB.</p> <p>All partner Section 151 officers have agreed to maintain a reserve equivalent to one year's repayment. This financial buffer ensures loan obligations can be covered even in the event of funding gaps. In line with this approach, this Plan proposes setting aside a further £530,000 to support new loans for Long Stratton Bypass and Hethel Technology Park, increasing the total reserve to £3.875 million. This proactive financial planning strengthens the resilience of the borrowing strategy and reduces the risk of default.</p>
<p>Risks related to Local Government Reorganisation</p>	<p>Difficult to define currently.</p>	<p>The Greater Norwich authorities are continuing to plan for both short- and long-term delivery of strategic infrastructure. While the future boundaries and governance structures of any new unitary authorities remain unclear, it is already evident that the IIF will need to continue—CIL receipts will still be collected, existing IIF-funded projects will be delivered, and current loans will require repayment. Future projects will also need to be supported. Although governance arrangements may need to evolve to reflect any new structures, the IIF is a strategic fund that already operates successfully across local authority boundaries on a voluntary basis. This flexibility positions it well to adapt to any future changes, ensuring continuity and stability in programme delivery despite any wider organisational transition.</p>

Other options considered

46. The lower level of community infrastructure levy received recently required consideration about whether to invite applications for funding from the

Infrastructure Investment Fund. It was agreed that there were sufficient funds to do so.

47. The projects that have been recommended for inclusion in the Annual Growth Programme as part of the Plan have emerged from a systematic and collaborative process between the partner authorities. This is managed by the Greater Norwich Team who evaluate submissions against clear set of criteria.

Reasons for the decision/recommendation

48. Cabinet is invited to approve the Plan so community infrastructure levy funds collected from developers and pooled with neighbouring authorities under the auspices of the GNGB are allocated to a programme of infrastructure investments that is needed to support development in the Greater Norwich area, including at Woodrow Pilling Park and the Yare Valley Walk at UEA.

Appendices:


Appendix A – Draft Greater Norwich Joint Five-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2026-2031

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