NORWICH City Council

Climate and environment emergency executive panel

Date: Tuesday, 10 June 2025
Time: 16:30
Venue: Mancroft room, City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH

Committee members:

Councillors:

Bolton
Champion
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Agenda

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1 Election of Chair

To elect a Chair for the Civic Year 2025-2026.

2 Election of Vice-Chair

To elect a Vice-Chair for the Civic Year 2025-2026.

3 Apologies

To receive apologies for absence

4 Declarations of interest

(Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting)

5 Minutes 3 - 6

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2025.

6 Council's Waste Service Updates - verbal presentation

7 Trees For Norwich - A 10-Year Management Plan 7 - 40

To ask the Climate and Environment Emergency Executive Panel to provide feedback on the "*Trees for Norwich - A 10-Year Management Plan*".

8 General Update 41 - 60

Purpose - To update the Climate and Emergency Executive Panel on progress on the delivery of the current Environmental Strategy 2020-2025, progress on the delivery of the current Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2032 and the development of the new Climate Responsive Norwich programme 2025-2035.

NORWICH City Council

Item 5

MINUTES

Climate and Environment Emergency Executive Panel

16:00 to 17:40 **11 February 2025**

Present: Champion (Chair), Hampton (Vice-Chair), Harper, Hoechner, Lubbock and Padda

1. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Hampton declared an interest in item 4 as a vice-chair of the Norwich Climate Commission

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2024.

3. General Update

The Environmental Strategy Manager introduced the report.

A supplier had been appointed to install solar panels on the Riverside leisure centre and work was due to take place late February/early March.

The Council was progressing the Solar PV feasibility study for General Fund Assets to the next stage. Solar PV had been installed at City Hall and work was underway to identify other buildings where solar panels could be installed. The team were building a business case and submitting planning applications for further installations. The fitting of panels at the Halls would be in the second tranche and would be a more difficult building to attach PV panels too.

Officers considered the best way to use the funds set aside. Officers had agreed that minimal risk/high return measures were the best options, such as roof and wall insulation. The installation of heat pumps would be considered when sufficient funds were available. A further exercise would take place during 2025/26 to establish further funding option using council or municipal loans.

The Panel noted the success of the “Be bright be seen” stall which had been sited in City Hall in December 2024. Together with its partners, Sustrans, and Norfolk County Council, it had distributed bicycle lights and reflectors to staff.

The Chair asked if the Council was part of the cycle to work scheme. Officers would investigate and feed back to the Panel.

One member asked if the current spend on the completed leisure centre retrofits would mean that not all fifteen leisure centres would be completed. Officers confirmed there was sufficient funding to complete all fifteen.

Officers reported that a bid had been submitted under the Government's "Warm Homes" scheme. The bid was for £21m for a three-year scheme. However, if the Government continued to fund this scheme it was expected to become a five-year scheme. The cost of the scheme was £7m a year so the bid would then increase to £35m. The Government would be awarding the funding based on "expression on interest" (EOI) so no formal bid was needed and the outcome of the EOI would be known at the end of February.

One member was concerned that the HRA was underspent and queried what would happen if the warm homes funding was underspent and whether it would need to be returned. Officers explained that the Government was mindful of local authorities' ability to spend and the EOI was based on the best 6 months previous performance. The team had been successful in delivering the scheme previously and officers were confident that this would be the case in the next round of funding. The Environmental Strategy Team has sufficient funds to recruit before the scheme started as they had used previous schemes to build capacity.

One member asked if the scheme included private rental tenants and officers confirmed that it would. Households in areas of multiple indices of deprivation with an EPC rating of below C would qualify. Households with an income of less than £36,000 would also be able to apply and the Government had simplified the application process.

(Asher Minns, Co-Chair of the Norwich Climate Commission and John Moore, independent technical consultant for Norwich Climate Commission joined the meeting at this point to give a presentation. The slides for the presentation were available here: link to slides)

Asher Minns introduced the presentation and highlighted the work of the Norwich Climate Commission. He outlined the effects of global warming in Norwich. Detailing the correlation between income and emissions; emissions were higher in more affluent areas. Another factor affecting climate risk was a rise in the population. Several challenges would need to be considered to address these issues. Asher Minns also highlighted the successful funding applications and future plans of the Commission.

John Moore then detailed the work of "Our Power". "Our Power" had received funding and six "Energy Champions" would be working in six pilot communities who had delivered over 200 engagements and it was expected that by the end of the pilot programme there would have been over 450 engagements. The organisation would be attending the Norwich Science Festival which would take place between 15 and 22 February 2025. Members noted the volunteer recruitment event taking place on 27 February 2025.

John Moore highlighted the Green Doctor scheme, run by Groundwork East, helped people with energy debt. It was proving to be extremely popular. The scheme started in July 2024 and so far, 127 households had been visited. It provided energy saving solutions such as radiator reflector panels and draught proofing windows and doors.

The scheme had saved 19,876kgCO2e across the city. The Panel noted that “Our Power” provided a similar scheme. Officers were considering making a case to “Groundwork East” to provide another Green Doctor.

In relation to the Norfolk Net Zero Communities project a retrofit working group had been established to develop a retrofit hub, £25,000 had been allocated to the project’s budget for an online trusted information resource which would also be available in other formats. The group had developed a briefing for the hub. They were working on how to engage different communities. The objective of the hub was to provide good quality information and have funding freely available to people.

The Panel was provided with an update on EV charging. Officers explained that the future of transport was not just EV chargers but improving public transport to avoid reliance on car use.

Norfolk County Council had made an offer to install a rapid EV charger in one of the City Council owned city car parks and it was proposed that this could be the Queens Road car park. The installation of lower power EV chargers was continuing. There would be twenty-two installations across the city. Thirteen were already active with the remainder due to be installed shortly.

Officers updated members on the “Big Community Switch,” a collective purchasing scheme which offered household the opportunity to save money on energy bills. The registration for the scheme closed in December 2024. A total of 670 residents had registered.

A theatre project “Mousehold to the Marsh” was being delivered by the Common Lot. It was aimed at engaging Norwich residents, through art and media, in topics relating to nature and climate change. The Council had provided a grant of £3000 to underpin the project. Performances would take place between 2 and 13 July 2025 at various green spaces across the city.

The Chair had suggested that a Mousehold Heath Fair should be held to coincide with the final performance and welcomed support.

The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) a £5.1m scheme, in partnership with Eon Energy Solutions Ltd, in 2024/25 and 2025/26, to install solar PV, as well as loft insulation. The scheme was off to a strong start with sixty-five of the target 260 installations already underway.

Officers were waiting to hear if their bid to the Warm Homes: Social Housing fund (wave 3) had been successful. If successful the funding of £36m would be used to deliver solar PV, air source heat pumps and a ground source heat pump system over a three-year period commencing in April 2025.

Work was underway to understand the potential for low carbon heat networks in the Council’s social housing estates. To replace out of date gas boilers in one of the city’s general needs housing blocks, a feasibility study had been undertaken on a replacement ground source heat pump system, which was included in the Warm Homes: Social Housing fund bid.

Officers had made an expression of interest (EOI) to the Nature Towns and Cities Fund, which was led by the Council in partnership with Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Norfolk County Council and South Norfolk and Broadland District Councils. The EOI had been successful, and the Council had been invited to submit a bid. The bid would be for £0.775m to deliver the "Nature City Norwich" project.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) was being consulted on, with the responses due on 11 February 2025. Following this a wider consultation would be undertaken.

Officers were exploring the creation of an urban nature recovery network which would enable partners to further protect habitats and create a "nature map" of assets. The assets on the outskirts of the city had been mapped and officers were now looking to map the nature areas in the city.

One member pointed out the link between nature and mental health. Officers confirmed that this was one of the objectives of the Biodiversity Strategy, which included improving wellbeing by improving access to nature.

The Panel noted that plans in relation to Nature Recovery Networks (NRN) were being developed. The responsibility for NRNs could be subject to change under Devolution and Local Government but officers were trying to progress as much as possible before this took place.

The Council was consulting with key partners and anchor institutions regarding the "Climate Responsive Norwich (CRN) Programme 2025-2035. Responses were expected by 31 January 2025, once analysed they would be incorporated into the citywide climate action plan. The council was also meeting with consultees, and it was hoped that the feedback received would be reported at the next CEEEP meeting.

The feedback from the CRN Programme consultation would be used to inform the "Net-zero pathway" plan being produced. The net zero pathway public consultation was taking place at the Norwich Science festival. The consultation had been undertaken by Opergy Net Zero ltd. Officers would provide more detail at the next meeting.

Officers confirmed that the carbon removal actions set out in the previous carbon footprint report had been implemented, with two tree planting schemes being invested in.

RESOLVED to:

(1) Thank the Environmental Strategy Manager for the presentation.

(2) Thank Asher Minns and John Moore for their presentations.

CHAIR

TREES FOR NORWICH

A 10-Year Management Plan

TREES FOR NORWICH

A 10-Year
Management Plan

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Version control			
Date	Version number	Reason	Author
26/02/2025	V.09		P. Rabbitts / E. Bolton
07/03/2025	V.10	Feedback from Biodiversity team	P. Rabbitts
19/03/2025	V.11	Feedback from Executive Director	P. Rabbitts
08/05/2025	V.12	Feedback from Biodiversity Team	J. Wilkinson
09/05/2025	V.13	Issued to CEEP	P. Rabbitts

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FOREWORD BY COUNCILLOR EMMA HAMPTON

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THE NEED AND CONTEXT FOR THIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Norwich City Council manages thousands of trees growing in the city. These are found within many of its parks and open spaces and large areas of woodlands that we manage directly.

Trees are an essential part of the environment and vital to healthy urban living. At a time of growing awareness of global climate change, trees and the care of trees is more important than ever. The City Council has been committed to the responsible management of the city's trees and has been planting trees in the city since the start of the 20th century, building on the excellent work carried out by well-known city forefathers including Captain Sandys-Winsch, parks superintendent from 1919 to 1953 who planted 20,000 trees, making Norwich the green and 'fine' city it is today.

Trees for Norwich - A 10-year Management Plan reaffirms the council's ongoing commitment to responsible tree management and to maintaining and enhancing the city's canopy cover. This is defined as the area of leaves, branches and stems of trees covering the ground when viewed from above and is usually expressed as a percentage.

Trees play an important role within an urban environment. There has been extensive research in recent years demonstrating the significant benefits trees bring to our physical and mental health, our social and economic wellbeing, to biodiversity, to the air we breathe, and the soil beneath our feet. They can in many cases also act as an acoustic barrier to noise. This is particularly beneficial in an urban area such as ours where traffic noise and noise within high density housing is a potential issue. They also help offset the effects of heavy rainfall, helping to mitigate flood risk, and offset the 'urban heat island effect'. They capture and store carbon and particulates which pose an increasing risk to human health. Together, these benefits that trees provide us with are called 'eco-system services'.

This Management Plan sets out the City Council's approach to the management of its trees on its own land for the overall benefit of the city, its residents, employers and visitors.

Trees bring beauty to our city, but it is central to the management approach that they are not simply considered individually as aesthetic objects but recognised as a key element of the city's green infrastructure essential to the quality of life in Norwich.

This Management Plan sets out the council's commitment to protect, enhance and maintain trees in the city. It describes how this commitment will be delivered and measured.

SUMMARISING THE AIMS OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Trees bring many benefits to the city and its residents. This document describes the current tree population in Norwich and how these trees will be managed, inspected and maintained. For instance, it sets out how and why trees are pruned, the circumstances when they will not be pruned and the reasons why trees sometimes must be removed.

The Management Plan affirms a presumption against the removal of healthy trees, subject to complaints, unless the basis of a complaint has an over-riding justification, and no alternative management practice is practicable.

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The City Council will take steps to protect its trees from threats such as the activities of statutory undertakers (including gas, water, electricity and tele-communications) and other excavation activities or building works.

There will be a continuation of tree planting, in suitable sites, to help maintain and extend the tree canopy cover across the city.

The Management Plan will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect changes in national legislation and developments in arboricultural best practice.

VISION STATEMENT

Norwich City Council's vision for its trees is:

"To preserve and expand the urban forest in a way that is sustainable for present and future generations, and to achieve this we will protect and maintain a safe and resilient urban forest and increase and diversify the urban forest in Norwich"

Trees for Norwich is a plan of how the council aims to manage the treescape in Norwich. This will include working together with all the stakeholders to protect, grow and maintain the urban forest. To deliver this overarching plan, it is important we look at the wider national, regional and local policy priorities. These are summarised in Appendix A.

Chapelfield Gardens

The purpose of this management plan

A Tree Management Plan is a comprehensive statement of intent for how we plan to manage, maintain and develop the urban forest in Norwich. It will:

1. Allow for greater understanding of the current tree stock and highlight the contribution it makes to local ecosystem services.

2. Provide a framework for the cost-effective management of all trees in the city and articulating the direction Norwich City Council is traveling.

3. Support councillors as they advocate for their constituents by enabling them with clear policy statements along with detailed guidance.

4. Improve tree health with greater emphasis on the benefits of our proactive tree management and how improved tree health increases the benefits that trees provide us.

5. List the key strengths and weakness of the tree stock and allow us to develop short-medium-long-term goals, objectives, and priorities. It sets out how these can be achieved and measured through clear aims and objectives.

6. Create greater transparency and accountability.

7. Link to other plans and strategies, the Tree Management Plan will align with other council priorities in the Norwich 2040 City Vision, as well as 'We are Norwich: A community-led plan 2024-2029', the Biodiversity Strategy, the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Parks and Green Spaces Strategy and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

To ensure a sustainable urban forest, the Tree Management Plan can be used to support the council's case for more trees and enable us to take advantage of funding opportunities from central government and other grant awarding bodies.

THE KEY BENEFITS OF HAVING A TREE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The urban forest provides a broad range of benefits to people that add to the wider ecosystem services that all the green infrastructure supports. The ecosystem services that trees deliver is broadly linked to their size and the canopy cover that they provide. We will use this Management Plan to highlight the value that trees provide to communities and to ensure that they are viewed as a positive asset that contribute towards to a diverse and vibrant culture in Norwich.

The key benefits of having a defined Management Plan, and through its planned delivery and implementation, are considerable, and will ultimately provide:

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1. **A sustainable urban forest -** that has everything it needs to maintain its extent and enable it to provide the desired ecosystem services.

- **Improved tree health** – increases the ecosystem services that trees provide; healthy trees make a much greater contribution. Proactively managing trees identifies potential issues and enables us to mitigate these in a timely manner. Having a safe, healthy urban forest is integral to promoting increasing the urban forest in Norwich.

- **Tree protection and retention** – is an integral part of maintaining the urban forest, trees should be removed only when it is necessary and replaced with trees that give us the same or increased benefits. To help us protect trees we currently hold 615 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) and have seventeen conservation areas. Having robust tree protection identifies 'at risk' trees and highlights the obligations that potential developers and landowners must maintain and improve the urban forest. Retaining existing trees is more valuable for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) than planting replacement trees, therefore a robust tree retention policy will be enforced during the development process.

- **Increased tree canopy cover** - in line with advice from central government and national governing bodies, we should be working towards increasing the tree canopy cover in Norwich, to a baseline target of 30%. An i-tree eco survey in 2020 put the canopy cover data for Norwich at 17.4% (±2% tolerance of i-Tree Canopy). This Management Plan will assist our aims in increasing tree canopy cover.

- **Resilience to climate change** – a healthier, larger, and more diverse urban forest that increases the positive ecosystem services that trees provide. Creating continuity and enabling measurable contingency plans to be put in place to counter the negative effects of climate change.

- **Tree diversity** – greater diversity of age and species increases resilience within the tree population.

- **Planting the right tree in the right place** – planting trees in a sustainable way to increase the tree canopy cover in Norwich, this will put an emphasis on planting the 'right tree in the right place' and will enable us to efficiently accomplish our aims. It will make sure that we consider factors that influence species suitability such as local environmental conditions, ecosystem services, climate change resilience and whether there is space for the tree to grow to maturity without coming into conflict with infrastructure. Good tree selection will mean that future management costs are minimised.

- **Biodiversity** – trees contribute to biodiversity, a larger, healthier urban forest will aid the council's broader aim to increase biodiversity across the city. They provide connectivity between areas of separated habitat and are themselves habitat providing shelter and food for many species.

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2. **Community engagement -** an aim to share and discuss the benefits that trees provide by:

- **Enabling communities** – by building on the proactive work the council is doing with existing friends groups involved in parks, open spaces and natural areas. We can engage with communities to develop community relationships and promote a culture of shared ownership.

- **Greater benefits to society** – by expanding the urban forest and increasing tree numbers we will also be increasing the health and wellbeing of communities.

3. **A thriving urban forest** that can contribute ecosystem services into the future through:

- **Cost efficiencies** - tree management highlighting the benefits of investing in effective proactive tree management. By having an adopted Management Plan, this increases our chances of attracting funding to support the trees in Norwich through improved monitoring and analysis. It will also help us to forecast upcoming budgetary requirements and apply for funding opportunities as they arise.

- **Reduced incidences of emergency tree work** - through having healthier trees and more effective management. This will have a knock-on effect for reduced instances of culpability following damage to property.

- **Minimised environmental impact of the climate emergency** - by highlighting the positive ecosystem services the Management Plan can support how we improve resilience.

- **Sequestration of carbon** – by trees occurs as they grow, this is increasingly important to offset the negative impacts of pollution from the urban environment. Trees directly reduce the amount of atmospheric CO2.

- **Pollution control** – from trees planted in the right place by filtering the air and trapping particulates within their foliage improves air quality. Planting trees in the right place also forms a barrier that can lessen the effects of noise and light pollution.

- **Shade effect** – of trees is progressively more significant in our warming climate, higher temperatures and prolonged periods of drought put increased pressure on urban communities. Trees planted next to buildings and in public open space reduce summertime temperatures.

- **Reducing the 'urban heat island effect'** – that is created in towns and cities by these urban environments producing and trapping more heat than the surrounding countryside. Trees do this by releasing water vapor through a process called evapotranspiration, that in combination with shading surfaces significantly reduces urban temperatures.

- **Rainwater interception** - trees reduce the runoff caused by storms by slowing the water flow in various ways; through direct capture in root systems, bark and canopy; by stabilising

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soil allowing it to hold and slow water and through water uptake process of transpiration and evaporation via foliage..

4. **Minimise the impact of pests and diseases** affecting trees that are becoming increasingly more prevalent and challenging. The UK Plant Health Information Portal holds information on pests and diseases affecting trees. Trees for Norwich highlights these and contains information about how we will manage them in the Priorities section.

- **Current threats** - issues such as ash die-back, acute oak decline and oak processionary moth.

- **Future threats** - issues that we may face in the future such as *Xylella fastidiosa* or the Emerald ash borer beetle.

- **Biosecurity and tree planting** – stock needs to be procured from companies accredited under the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme and in line with the Plant Biosecurity Strategy for Great Britain 2014.

Earlham Park

UNDERSTANDING THE COUNCIL TREE STOCK

A resource called Tree Equity Score UK has been created by the Woodland Trust in collaboration with partners and aims to provide a simplified assessment of overall tree distribution in urban areas. It gives neighbourhoods a score ranging from 0-100. A score of 100 means that the area has met the minimum standard for tree cover. Norwich currently has a composite score of 90 (Appendix B).

To help us understand the urban forest in Norwich we have identified concerns through analysis of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT), (Appendix C) to help develop our objectives. This form of analysis works by creating a simple matrix, for example, if concerns that we have identified in the weaknesses, are also present in some form as threats, then this can be easily identified in the objectives.

OUR MAIN AIMS, PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

Our aims form the basis of a much larger working action plan built around the main aims, priorities, operational actions, and key performance indicators (KPI).

Progress will be measured annually, every five years and every ten years respectively.

Aim 1: Protect and maintain a safe and resilient urban forest

The value of well managed trees and the wider ecosystem services that they provide is increased by proactive tree management. The outcome of the financial outlay on proactive tree management are the added benefits that trees provide. These increased ecosystem services help Norwich to combat the adverse effects of climate change.

Proactive tree management is when trees are actively managed to anticipate what work might be needed by identifying upcoming concerns, for example ordering work to prune branches away from a footpath before they become an issue for pedestrians.

Priority 1: Proactive tree management – Norwich City Council (NCC) already takes a proactive approach to managing its trees with the details of our cyclical inspection program described in our Tree Risk Management Framework (TRMF).

The TRMF aims to minimise the risks posed to people and property by trees and enables NCC to manage our trees to the benefit of local communities. This framework ensures that we continue to proactively manage our trees.

Maintaining our trees proactively with periodic inspections helps early identification of pests and diseases allowing for timely intervention, planning and reporting.

- **Action 1.1:** Complete all tree safety inspections in line with the TRMF.
- **Action 1.2:** Order work to trees in line with the TRMF.
- **Action 1.3:** Investigate all customer tree enquiries within the allocated time frames in line with the TRMF.
- **Action 1.4:** Report any suspected findings of tree pests and diseases which are of concern in Britain.

Priority 2: Norwich's tree inventory – is a record of all the council managed trees and includes information such as a trees location, size, age, and health. Since 2010 we have been recording tree inventory data digitally and currently hold information on 39,400 trees. The data is then uploaded to the council's GIS systems and can be viewed by both council employees and members of the public.

This data is essential when establishing future planning for the maintenance of the council's trees.

We use the Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees (CAVAT) methodology to value the council trees, this assesses the economic, social, and environmental benefits that they provide Norwich and have been valued at just over £300,000,000.

Our tree inventory has documented most of the council managed trees, and we will prioritise surveying the remaining areas.

- **Action 2.1:** Earlham Cemetery – trees within falling distance of the main roads, pathways and boundaries have been recorded; we will complete the final areas within the next five years.
- **Action 2.2:** Rosary Cemetery – trees within falling distance of the main roads, pathways and boundaries have been recorded; we will complete the final areas within the next five years.

Priority 3: Parks and play areas – Norwich has 23 formal parks and 81 play spaces that contain 11,141 trees.

Amongst these there are several Grade II and II* historic parks and gardens designed by Captain Sandys-Winsch, park's superintendent at Norwich City Council from 1919 to 1956. Many are also within the city's conservation areas.

It is in these heritage parks where the trees present the greatest management challenges. Many of the original tree lined avenues are now coming to the end of their lives at similar times and are starting to develop biomechanical features and diseases that could become a safety concern. We must have a plan in place to start the process of renewal of the trees in Norwich's heritage parks so that it is done in a way not to adversely affect their overall aesthetic.

- **Action 3.1:** Include tree renewal programmes for declining avenues in park management plans.
- **Action 3.2:** Identify new areas suitable for tree planting and to include these in management plans.
- **Action 3.3:** Seek longer term funding for the replacement and management of trees within these important heritage parks.

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Priority 4: Woodland and natural area management – we maintain 28 woodland sites around Norwich of various types and ages.

Woodlands are a significant part of Norwich's landscape, where they provide an important green lung, diverse habitats, accessible natural green space as well as recreation space for people to enjoy.

Much of the council's woodland is mature and well established having been planted by previous landowners prior to the industrial revolution. Many of the trees are mature and moving into veteran status. Sensitive and ongoing management is needed to maintain the woodland stock and introduce new trees ready to replace the older ones into the future.

Norwich City Council is already actively managing its woodlands, with recent woodland management work carried out at Marlpit Paddock, Danby Wood, Bunkers Hill Woodland, Netherwood Green Wooded Ridge and Charter Wood. The work has involved woodland thinning, haloing around specimen trees, coppicing, pollarding creating woodland glades and replanting with mixed native species.

Proactive woodland management involves making difficult decisions regarding the removal of trees that is needed to create healthier more resilient urban woodlands. Any tree removal in the urban area is often viewed negativity by local communities although it is an essential part good management. We will engage with, and communicate, the benefits of maintaining woodland to local communities.

- **Action 4.1:** Increase capital and revenue resources for more proactive management of woodlands, natural areas and tree belts (applying the concepts of continuous cover forestry to the urban environment to create and maintain healthy age structure without losing canopy cover). The council will make best use of grant applications where appropriate.
- **Action 4.2:** Carry out National Vegetation Classification (NVC) level 1 / 2 survey of the woodlands – baseline data survey on appropriate sites.

Priority 5: Mousehold Heath

Mousehold Heath consists of woodland, grassland, heathland, and recreational open space covering 184 acres. It was given to NCC by the Church of England in 1880 for the citizens of Norwich. Historically, Mousehold Heath was much larger and predominantly open heathland, whereas today there are large areas of maturing woodland.

Mousehold Heath is maintained and preserved by the Mousehold Heath Conservators and managed on a day-to-day basis by two wardens. Where possible, work to maintain the trees on the heath is carried out by the wardens in cooperation with local volunteer organisations.

Professional tree work is carried out as necessary around the heath and adjacent highways by our main contractor NCSL. When ordering this work, we will consider the priorities highlighted in the Heath's management plan.

- **Action 5.1:** Mousehold Heath wardens will carry out tree inspections in accordance with our Tree Risk Management Framework and report findings to the arboricultural officers.

- **Action 5.2:** To work with Mousehold Heath wardens to allow natural regeneration of the woodland.
- **Action 5.3:** To work with Mousehold Heath wardens to manage invasive species such as sycamore and rhododendron.
- **Action 5.4:** To leave standing dead and decaying wood where it is safe to do so and create dead and decaying habitat wood piles.

Priority 6: Trees within housing areas

The benefits that trees provide play an important role in improving the quality of council tenants' lives and increases biodiversity throughout the city.

We maintain 8,438 trees within communal housing areas and 1,253 trees recorded in tenanted council houses throughout the city.

In 2019, we marked the centenary of council housing with several celebrations, showcasing the proud history of homes within our city. To mark the event, we planted 100 trees in communal housing areas around the city.

Historically there have been tree management issues in housing areas caused by inappropriate tree planting that continue to cause issues for tenants. We will use the principles of planting the 'right tree in the right place' to reduce future management issues.

- **Action 6.1:** identify new areas suitable for tree planting as part of the estate aesthetic programme and especially in areas of low tree canopy cover.

Priority 7: Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 sets out the legislation to enable the council to legally protect trees. This is via a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or if they are growing within a conservation area.

Protecting trees from unnecessary pruning or removal is an import function of the council. We currently hold over 600 Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) and have seventeen conservation areas in which trees are offered protection.

Trees are assessed on their suitability for a TPO using the TEMPO system (Tree evaluation method for preservation orders) developed by Forbes Laird Arboricultural Consultancy. We only consider serving a TPO if a tree is under threat.

- **Action 7.1:** Carry out a TPO review - we currently hold 615 Tree Preservation Orders that are helping to protect trees in Norwich. Many of these have been in place for a long time and need reviewing. We will need to review internal and departmental resources to update the TPO register.
- **Action 7.2:** Increase public awareness of the importance of TPOs and the importance of the legal requirements and their implications where appropriate.

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Priority 8: Planning Development and Enforcement

The National Planning Policy Framework is the national set of planning policies that must be applied when considering applications for new development. The policies include statements regarding how development should protect and maintain trees, stating that new streets should be tree lined and that trees should be incorporated into new developments with measures in place to secure long term maintenance. It also states that wherever possible existing trees should be retained.

As part of the recently introduced Environment Act new development projects have a greater responsibility to provide green infrastructure and biodiversity protections and enhancements. The new mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirement will help maintain and build in resilience to projects that could otherwise be harmful to the environment. Within the legislation there is also more protection for trees with an exemption status for irreplaceable habitat.

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 places a statutory duty on Local Authorities “to ensure whenever it is appropriate that in granting planning permission for any development, adequate provision is made by the imposition of conditions for the preservation or planting of trees.”

The City Council has several development management policies and supplementary planning documents in place which promote the protection and retention of trees and aiming to secure new tree planting as an integral part of new development, including.

The Council will only register applications for development when supplied with full tree related information in line with B.S.5837:2012.

- **Action 8.1:** Monitor construction sites where trees are affected by development to ensure that all tree protective measures are in place.
- **Action 8.2:** Liaise with the planning enforcement team in relation to tree protection/damage/removal issues related to new development.
- **Action 8.3:** Monitor new tree planting agreed through new development.

Priority 9: Enable community involvement

Around Norwich there are many ‘Friends’ groups and residents associations from local communities that work together with council officers to advocate for the parks and open spaces on behalf of citizens. We collaborate with them on management plans for trees in parks and they help us to liaise with local people.

We work in partnership with the Norwich Fringe Project and Mousehold Heath Wardens to maintain our natural areas and woodlands. When it is safe to do so, much of this work such as coppicing, pollarding, and woodland thinning is carried out by volunteers. We also run a tree sponsorship scheme called Trees for Norwich that allows local people to sponsor a new tree to be planted in the city.

As well as active engagement, we will investigate establishing a network of tree wardens to better connect with local communities to inform about the benefits trees provide and how people can get involved with helping to maintain our trees.

The Management Plan can create a platform to engage with local communities to give them a sense of ownership of the environment.

- **Action 9.1:** Investigate the potential to operate a pilot tree warden scheme in Norwich.
- **Action 9.2:** Expand the Trees for Norwich sponsorship scheme.
- **Action 9.3:** Work in contact with community enabling officers prior to tree planting and investigate how we can involve local communities.

Priority 10: Highway trees (Norfolk County Council Highways Department)

Norwich has 10,000 trees within the adopted highway. They are some of the most prominent and highly valued in the city and are maintained by Norfolk County Council's Highways department.

Highway trees contribute greatly to the urban forest improving amenity and should be preserved and enhanced

We work closely with highways officers to maintain the street trees in Norwich, and they welcome the chance to support our priorities within this Management Plan. They share our vision for a safe and resilient urban forest ready to combat future challenges.

Many of our street trees are in hard landscape areas, and this can complicate replacement tree planting. Priority should be given ensuring that there is provision for replacement planting as well as investigating the opportunities for new plantings.

- **Action 10.1:** Work with Norfolk County Council to identify areas for new and replacement tree planting along the highways, aligning with their 'Tree Planting and Resilience Strategy'.
- **Action 10.2:** To expand the Trees for Norwich sponsorship scheme.

Aim 2: Increase and diversify the urban forest in Norwich

By creating a larger and more diverse tree resource we can maximise the benefits that trees provide communities and ensure that the council's trees continue to make a positive contribution to climate adaptation.

Planting more of the right trees in the right places is key to succeeding to increase resilience to the impacts of climate change and the rise of invasive pests and diseases.

To enhance tree health and biosecurity, NCC currently procures all tree planting stock from companies accredited under the Plant Healthy Certification Scheme.

Priority 11: Increase tree canopy cover

Tree canopy cover (TCC) is a good indicator of the benefits that the urban forest can provide and an important management tool, it can be estimated using several different methods. These methods use different criteria that often creates varying results.

We should be working towards an ambition of increasing TCC in Norwich to 30% in line with advice from central government.

Our aspirations are that we should embrace the 3-30-300 rule proposed by Cecil Konijnendijk that states everyone should be able to see at least three trees from their home. We should aim to have 30% TCC in every neighbourhood and we should all be within 300 metres of the nearest high-quality green space. Of course, to achieve this, we need to know what we have in greater detail and therefore we need an accurate baseline figure for the tree canopy cover in Norwich before we can set a realistic and achievable target for improvement. There are several different methods for measuring TCC and they all have their own strengths and weaknesses. The method that we use needs to be easily repeatable so that we can measure future changes.

We already have some data regarding the TCC in Norwich. A biodiversity baseline study carried out in 2024 that was commissioned by the council has analysed lidar data and estimated that the tree canopy cover is currently 25.1%. As this is the most recent survey, we will be using this as the baseline figure for Norwich.

A study by Google of data from 2022 has been published putting the TCC in Norwich at 24%.

We also have data from a free online tool called i-tree eco, run by Forest Research in conjunction with i-Tree.

The last i-tree eco survey undertaken for the Norwich area in 2020 put the canopy cover at 17.4% (±2% tolerance of i-Tree Canopy). Analysis by wards highlights the lowest four that we can prioritise for improvement. These are Mancroft, Sewell, Catton Grove, and Nelson (Appendix D).

We will place an emphasis on planting ‘the right tree in the right place’ to enable the urban forest to grow without the need for large increases in maintenance budgets.

Although we have some limited data on the extent of the urban forest in Norwich greater understanding would enable us to better target areas for increasing tree canopy cover.

- **Action 11.1:** Utilise the agreed baseline figure for tree canopy cover in Norwich.
- **Action 11.2:** Set short-medium- and long-term targets to increase tree canopy cover in Norwich.
- **Action 11.3:** Improve newly planted tree establishment rates by monitoring annually the numbers of newly planted trees that survive for an initial three-year period.
- **Action 11.4:** Engage with stakeholders to identify new tree planting opportunities, prioritising wards with lowest TCC.
- **Action 11.5:** Work in partnership with Norfolk County Council Highways to develop opportunities for planting new street trees, prioritising wards with the lowest TCC.
- **Action 11.6:** Seek out and consider relevant funding opportunities and set short-medium- and long-term tree planting goals within a year.

Priority 12: Tree species diversity

As with other plant taxonomy, trees are categorised by their family, genera, species and variety with a healthy tree population having diverse mix.

To avoid monocultures urban tree populations should contain no more than 10% of a particular species, 20% of a particular Genus and 30% of a particular Family. Maintaining healthy species diversity will increase resilience enabling us to better combat the adverse effects of climate change and pests and diseases.

Norwich City Council owned trees are currently within these parameters (Appendix E). Although this is desirable, we are quite close to these tolerances for some of our trees, with the most common family and species being 25.6% Rosaceae and 9.26% Sycamore.

By increasing species diversity, we can build in greater resilience to future threats.

- **Action 12.1:** Analyse the tree species by ward to enable us to target concerns at a local level.
- **Action 12.2:** Monitor the species of new trees that we plant to ensure we maintain a diverse tree population.
- **Action 12.3:** Proactively manage woodlands that are becoming monocultures of sycamore to create healthier more diverse habitats.

Priority 13: Tree age diversity

To create greater resilience in the council tree stock, it should have a structure containing a healthy variation of different age classes. Tree age is usually linked to tree size, so tree populations are often measured by their size, using the stem diameter at breast height (DBH).

This method illustrates (Appendix F) that we have an aging tree population, ideally the council's trees should have 40% 0-20cm, 30% 20-40cm, 20% 40-60cm and 10% over 60cm.

The data clearly shows that we have too many old trees and not enough younger trees ready to take their place and that to have greater resilience we must work towards having a more diverse age structure of council trees.

- **Action 13:1:** Ensure that replacement tree planting is undertaken in the following planting season.
- **Action 13:2:** Work with stakeholders to identify areas for new tree planting.
- **Action 13.3:** Put management plans in place to facilitate the replacement of Norwich's aging tree avenues, tree groups and urban woodlands.
- **Action 13.4:** Introduce more coppiced areas in woodland and tree belt, plant suitable trees to be coppiced on rotation to create age diversity in woodlands.

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Review

We will monitor the Management Plan annually, to ensure that the performance indicators are progressing and are measured against the objectives. The medium- and long-term goals will then be reviewed at five- and ten-year intervals.

We will also investigate the possibility of working together with other local authorities by benchmarking.

We will also investigate opportunities for consultation with national bodies such as the Arboricultural Association, London Tree Officers Association and the Institute of Chartered Foresters.

Lion Wood

APPENDIX A: POLICY CONTEXT

Norwich 2040

A Liveable City that adapts and undergoes renewal... works together to combat climate change... values green and open spaces... has excellent air quality. This means protecting and maintaining our green and open spaces to improve biodiversity and air quality.

The Environment Act 2021

In 2021, The Environment Bill received royal assent to become The Environment Act. This operates as the UK's new framework of environmental protection following the UK's exit from the European Union and allows the government to enshrine environmental protection into law. It offers new powers to set binding targets, including for air quality, biodiversity, and waste reduction. Of note is the introduction of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), which requires development sites to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity compared to the pre-development condition of the site, and the strengthened duty on local authorities to act for biodiversity and monitor/report on those actions under the NERC Act 2006.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Local nature recovery strategies (LNRS) are a system of spatial strategies for nature and environmental improvement introduced under The Environment Act 2021. These strategies must agree priorities for nature recovery, map the most valuable existing areas for nature and map specific proposal for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals. The intention is for LNRSs to support the planning application process, including for mandatory biodiversity net gain, as well as the strengthened biodiversity duty introduced by the Environment Act. Norfolk County Council has been appointed as the responsible body in charge of producing the LNRS for Norfolk.

We are Norwich 2024-2029

This is the council's community-led plan which outlines five priorities. This Management Plan relates to the priority to create *A Climate Responsive Norwich*, fulfilling, to a greater or lesser degree, each of the four related aims, and particularly the third aim, as set out below:

1. A Net Zero council by 2030.
2. A Net Zero Norwich by 2045.
3. Vibrant parks and green spaces; and
4. Adapting to climate change.

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Green Spaces Better Places - A Parks and Green Spaces Strategy for Norwich - 2024-2034

The Parks and Green Spaces strategy sets out how Norwich will invest in and improve the parks and green spaces in the city. It applies to all parks and green spaces in Norwich excluding spaces within housing estates, highway verges and smaller ancillary amenity spaces. The strategy applies primarily to parks and green spaces, recreation grounds, cemeteries, play spaces, allotments, and our natural and semi-natural green space assets including the urban fringe, especially valuable in an urban community such as ours. It sets the direction of travel and will assist in securing funds for continued investment in our parks and green spaces.

Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2032

As set out in the council's Biodiversity Strategy, the council's biodiversity policy is to 'create a city where biodiversity can sustainably recover and thrive, halt species decline and increase species diversity and abundance by 2030 or sooner' affirming the council's commitment to lead and coordinate nature recovery in the city.

One of the actions of this strategy is to develop and implement a strategy for trees. A further action is to develop a nature recovery network for the city, a vital component of which are the city's trees.

Current Local Plan Policy

The currently adopted Local Plan for Norwich City Council consists of the following documents:

- Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk
- Norwich City Council Site Allocations Local Plan
- Norwich City Council Development Management Policies Local Plan

These documents contain multiple policies that support protection and enhancement of the natural environment including trees through the planning application process such as through JCS Policy 1, DM6 and DM7.

In addition, the council has also adopted several Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to assist in the application and implementation of the Development Management Policies. Of relevance is the Landscape and Trees SPD which sets out landscaping requirements for new developments in Norwich.

Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP)

Norwich City Council is jointly preparing the Greater Norwich Local Plan with Broadland and South Norfolk Councils. Once adopted, the GNLP will replace the JCS and the Site Allocations Local Plan for Norwich. This plan will set out the strategic planning policies and growth agenda for the Greater Norwich area to 2038. Policy 3 of this plan will also support the protection and enhancement of the natural environment in Norwich through the planning application process.

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Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy

Norwich City Council, along with Broadland and South Norfolk Councils, is in the process of producing a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Greater Norwich area. The main aim is to create a strategy that can be used to support the protection, enhancement, and provision of GI, promoting health and wellbeing, provide places for outdoor recreation and play, create, maintain, and improve habitats, help mitigate the effects of climate change and provide a linked network of multi-functional spaces. The strategy will establish a baseline of existing GI in Greater Norwich, an assessment of whether this meets current and future needs, identify future opportunities for GI, support planning applications and other decision making, and create delivery plans to implement the strategy.

River Wensum Strategy

Norwich City Council led on and produced the River Wensum Strategy along with partners including the Environment Agency, the Broads Authority, the Norwich Society, and Norfolk County Council. The strategy aims to bring life back to the river corridor in the city focussing on the unique social, economic, and environmental aspects and opportunities of this asset. The strategy contains a chapter on improving the environment and a delivery plan has been produced setting out the projects looking the deliver the aims of the strategy.

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APPENDIX B – TREE EQUITY SCORE

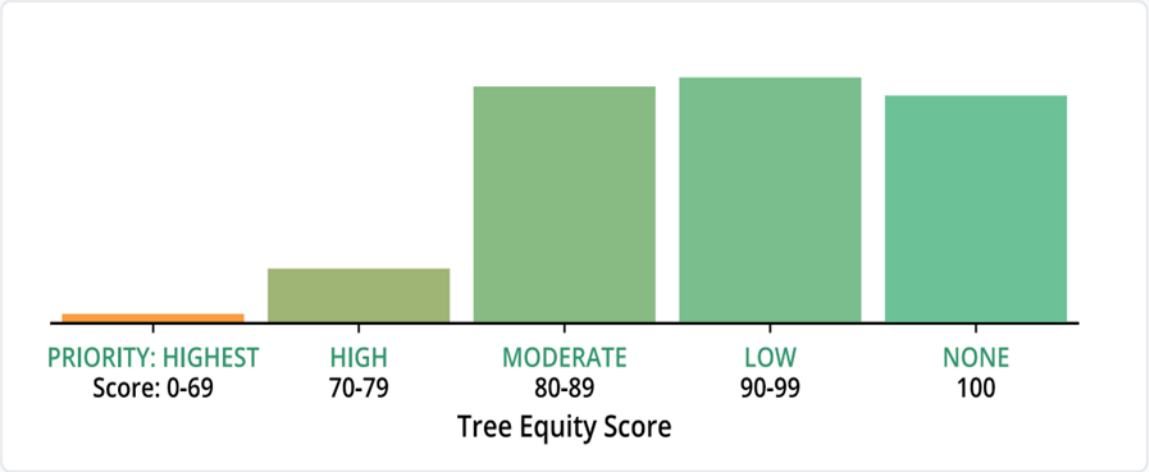
Norwich, England

Composite Score: 90

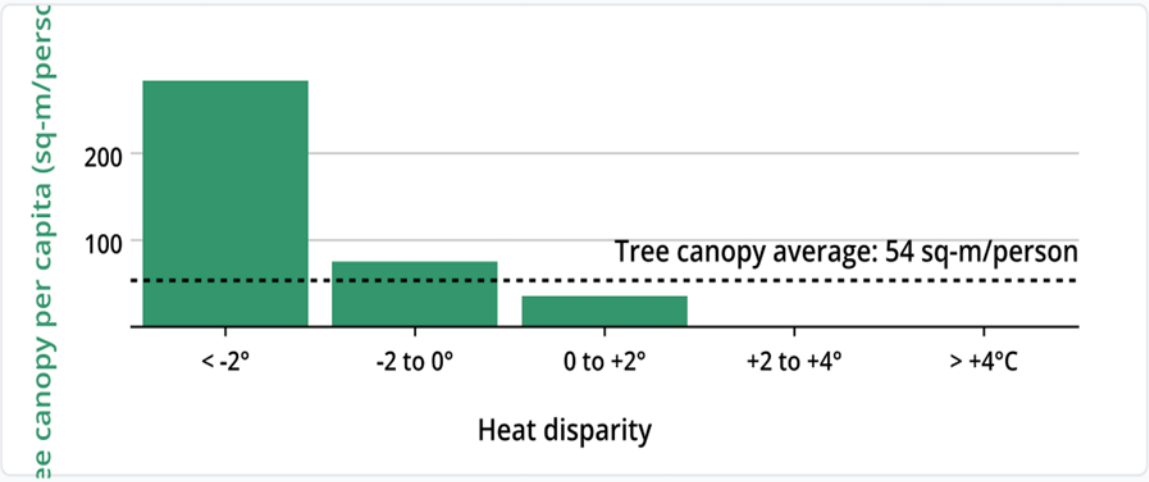
Summary of Norwich urban areas

Population	143,967
Income ranking (IMD)	mean: 12,274 | range: 1,004-32,040
Employment ranking (IMD)	mean: 13,052 | range: 1,080-32,635
Health ranking (IMD)	mean: 8,245 | range: 292-26,502
People from minoritised ethnic groups	13.1%
Children and older people	32.8%
Average NO2 air pollution	10.7 µg/m3
Average PM2.5 air pollution	7.3 µg/m3

Distribution of Tree Equity Scores



Tree canopy vs. Heat disparity



NORWICH City Council

Get all LSOAs to a Tree Equity Score of 75

1 of 85 have a Tree Equity Score below 75

172,601 sq-m of canopy expansion will be needed to get all LSOAs to a score of **75** (this is equivalent to 3,097 medium trees). See the significant benefits to the community this will create.

Total canopy added

0.53%

Annual ecosystem service value

£56,944

CARBON

Carbon sequestered

52.8

tonnes

Carbon sequestered equal to:

98

petrol-powered cars offset

WATER

Stormwater runoff prevented

3.1

million litres

Stormwater runoff equal to:

47

standard swimming pools

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AIR

Pm2.5 pollution removed

69.6

tonnes

Pm2.5 pollution equal to:

292

petrol-powered cars offset

Nitrogen dioxide removed

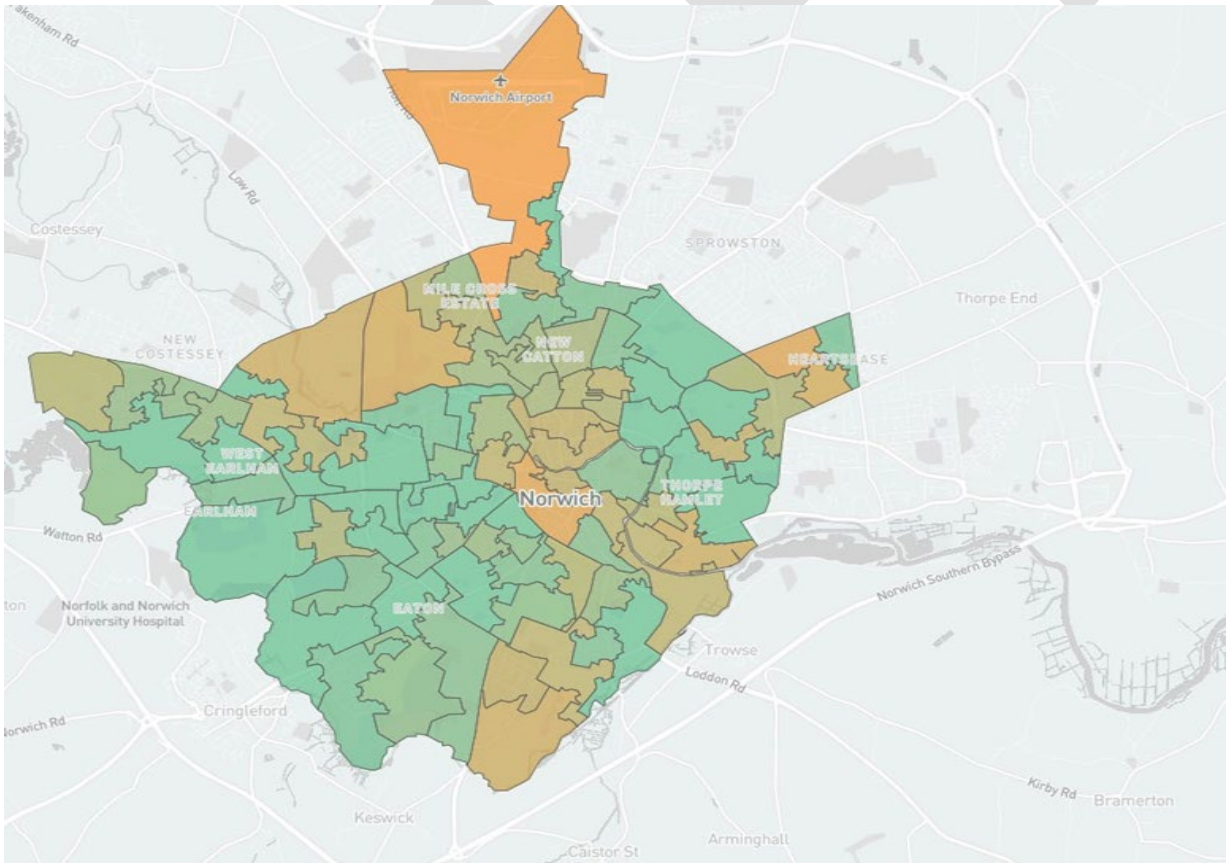
209.5

kg

Sulfur dioxide removed

27.1

kg



Norwich Tree equity score map

APPENDIX C SWOT ANALYSIS

This analysis guided the development of our objectives. Our main aims and priorities should include objectives that allow continuation of our strengths while also addressing the identified weaknesses, opportunities and threats:

- Tree age diversity
- Tree planting funding
- Young tree establishment
- Community engagement
- Woodland management
- Future Planning
- Pests and diseases
- Climate change

Strengths

- Tree risk management procedure – proactive management enables us to maintain our tree resource sustainably and fulfil the council's duty of care to protect members of the public from being harmed by trees.
- Digital GIS mapping and tree inventory data – since 2010 we have held all our tree management data within a specific digital application called Ezytreev. This is an essential tool when that enables the council to successfully manage its trees.
- Tree species diversity – we are currently maintaining a resilient tree resource in the city based on current tree species, genus and family so are ready to face future challenges.

Weaknesses

- Tree age diversity - Norwich has an aging tree population that needs greater diversity.
- Tree planting funding - to help us to maintain and increase the urban forest in Norwich requires additional funding. This adds pressure to the council's finances. We can apply for government funding as and when it becomes available, but this is intermittent.
- Young tree establishment rates - planting trees are a costly process requiring funding and large amounts of staff time to facilitate. We should work to prioritise improving our newly planted trees survival rates.
- Community engagement - at this time is limited, we should investigate ways to engage with communities to enable us to help improve residents understanding of the benefits that trees provide.
- Woodland management - in recent years we have concentrated resources on tree risk management. In the future, we need to engage a program of more proactive woodland management. However, this requires further investment and the award of successful external grant funding.

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- Future planning - too often we only look forward to the next scheduled tree inspection. To succeed we need to change the way we think about trees and use this Management Plan to be the catalyst for change and to look ahead to what the city will look like in the next 50-100 years. The mechanism for change is partly by thinking more strategically and by adopting Green Infrastructure principles.

Opportunities

- Tree planting funding – the Urban Tree Challenge Fund - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) and the Local Authority Treescapes Fund - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) are both available for Local Authorities to supplement their budgets. The council has taken advantage of these funding streams.
- Social and privately owned housing – we should encourage tree planting in the gardens of tenanted council and privately owned properties.
- Local business inclusion – we should engage with local businesses to promote the benefits that trees provide and encourage tree planting.
- Community engagement – we should look to engage with more with people about the benefits of trees and management decisions.
- Biodiversity baseline study – recommendations to inform further opportunities for growing the urban forest and increasing the ecosystem services it provides.
- Planning new developments – to include increased provision for tree planting as part of achieving mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

Threats

- Tree age diversity – an aging tree population threatens the sustainability of the urban forest, leaving it vulnerable to decline.
- Pests and diseases – are becoming an increasing threat, not only caused by the prevalence of imported plants, risking accidental introduction but also by the warming climate, that when combined with extreme weather events such as periods of drought and flooding, puts trees under stress increasing their vulnerability to pest and diseases.
- Climate change – has increased the number of extreme weather events that threaten urban trees. Heatwaves, drought, high winds, and flooding are occurring much more frequently. This is also affecting when trees come into leaf, flower and when leaves fall, impacting the length of the growing season that has consequences for ecosystems.
- Loss of trees through new developments – should not be seen as acceptable, the importance of trees and green infrastructure in providing high quality living space means that they should be given priority form the beginning of development planning.
- Veteran trees - require specialised management. Identifying the veteran trees of the future is vital to ensure continuity of habitat and to ensure the spectrum of age diversity is maintained.

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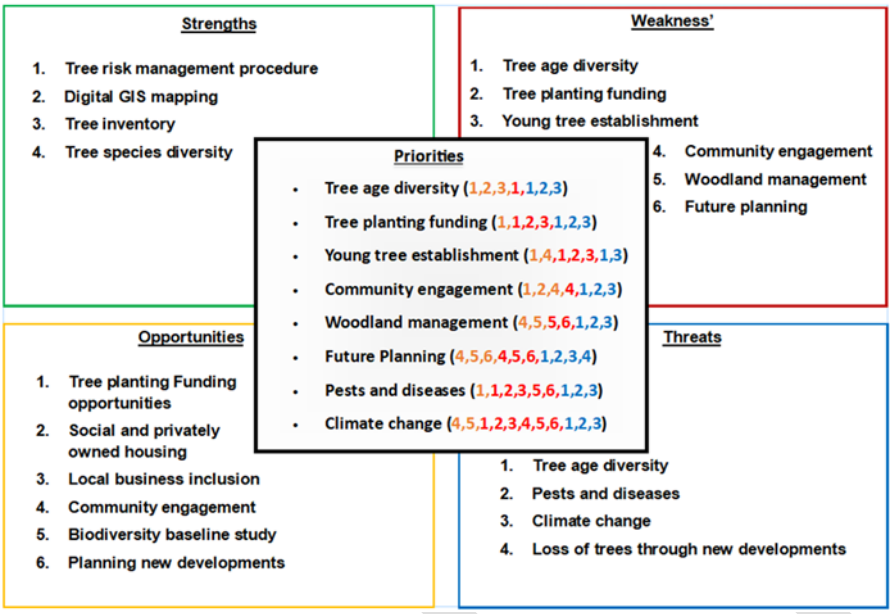

APPENDIX D: PERCENTAGE OF TREE COVER BY WARD

Ward	% TCC	Ward	% TCC
Eaton	27.9%	Mile Cross	18%
Lakenham	20.6%	Crome	16.5%
University	20.5%	Nelson	13.5%
Bowthorpe	20.2%	Catton Grove	12%
Thorpe Hamlet	19.3%	Sewell	11%
Town close	18.4%	Mancroft	10.7%
Wensum	18%		

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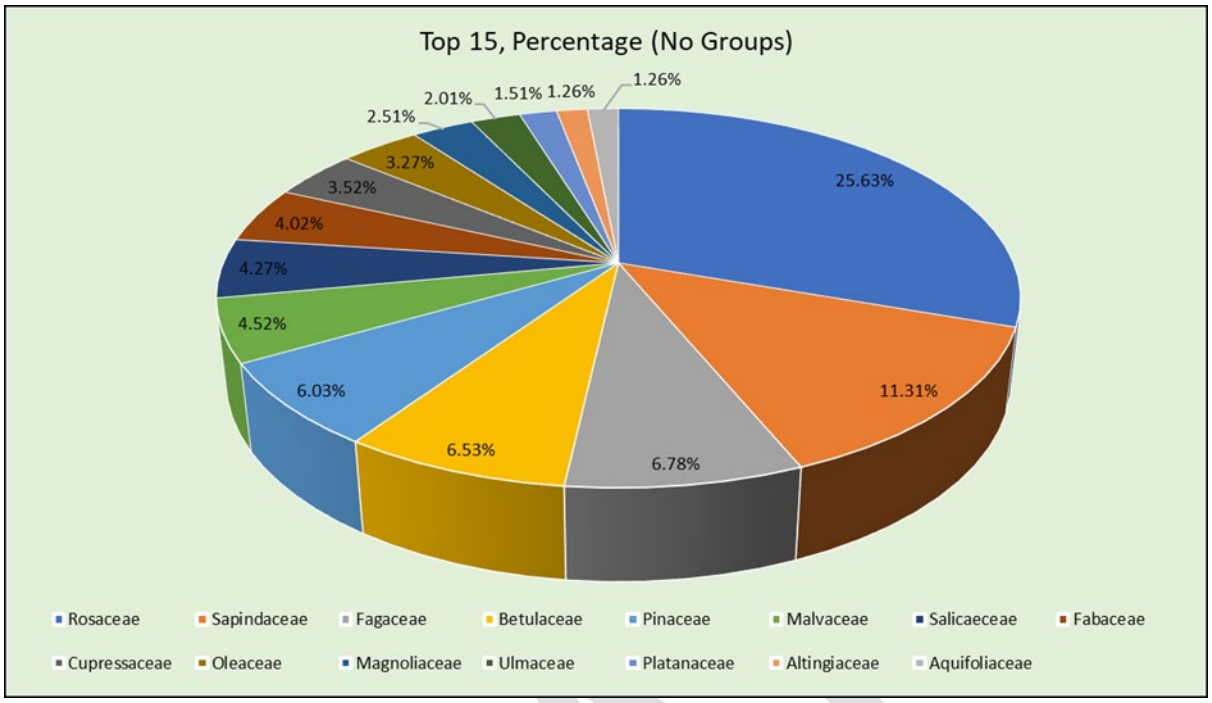
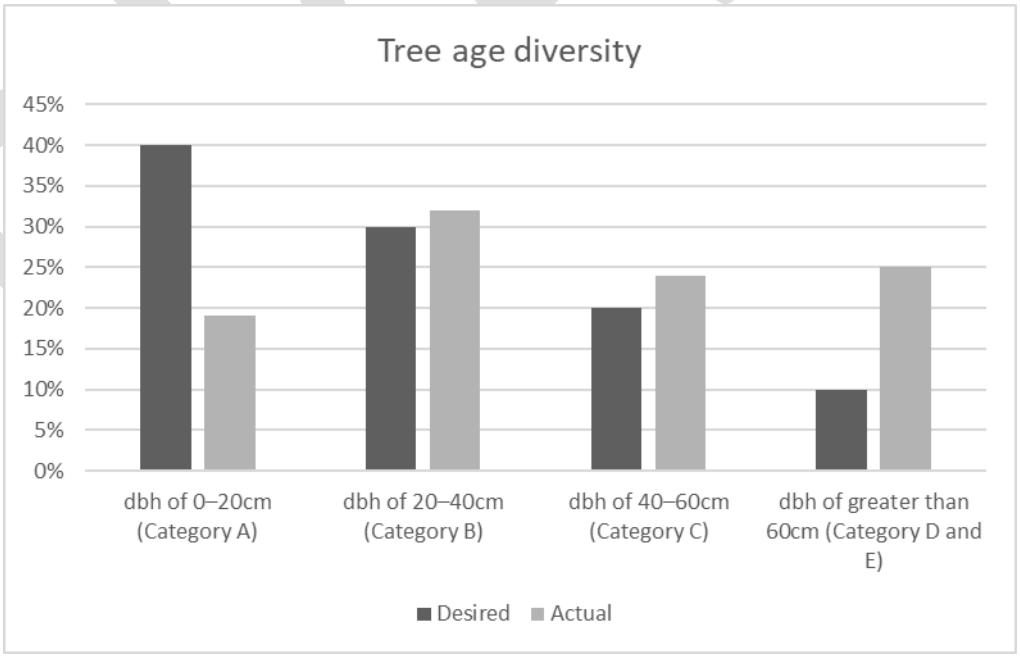
APPENDIX E: TOP 15 BY PERCENTAGE IN NORWICH



APPENDIX F: TREE AGE DIVERSITY



Tree size	Desired	Actual
0–20cm dbh (Category A)	40%	19%
20–40cm dbh (Category B)	30%	32%
40–60cm dbh (Category C)	20%	24%
60cm+ (Category D and E)	10%	25%

GLOSSARY

Arboriculture - The selection, production, planting, maintenance, and removal of all woody plants for amenity purposes.

Biodiversity - the variety of life in all its forms, levels and combinations; includes ecosystem diversity, species diversity, and genetic diversity.

Biosecurity - A set of precautions to reduce the risk of accidentally introducing or spreading alien invasive species, including potential pests and pathogens.

Carbon sequestration – the processes of capturing and storing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Diameter at breast height (DBH) - The diameter of a tree at around 1.5 metres above ground level.

Ecosystem Services - are the benefits and services provided by ecosystems that support human existence. These include continued provision of oxygen, clean air, drinking water, an equitable climate, the productivity of agriculture, forestry and oceans, control of flooding, soil erosion, coastal erosion and carbon sequestration.

Ecosystem – An area consisting of a community of species, interacting with each other and the physical environment where they live.

Environment - Includes the air, water and land, and the relationship that exists between them and all living things, including plants, man, and other animals.

GIS (Geographic information system) - A collection of computer hardware, software, and geographic data for capturing, storing, updating, manipulating, analysing and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information.

Green infrastructure (GI) - An interconnected network of waterways, wetlands, woodlands, greenways, parks, forests, and other open spaces that support native species.

Green space - Any vegetated land or water within an urban area that serves as recreation or open space. This includes neighbourhood and regional parks, gardens, cemeteries, playing fields, bike and walking paths, and urban landscaping.

Habitat - Food, water, shelter and space that supports plant or animal life.

Tree Inventory - gathering of accurate information on the location and characteristics of trees within a defined geographical area.

Native Species - Species present in a defined region for a certain amount of time without having been brought by humans (cf. exotic), for instance in Britain since the English Channel was flooded around 6,000 years ago.

Non-native species - A species that due to direct or indirect human activity occurs in locations beyond its known historical or potential natural range. Refers to species from another continent, region, ecosystem, or habitat.

Pollution - Substances introduced into the environment by human actions that contaminate the environment.

Tree canopy cover - a metric that measures the area of ground covered by the tree canopy which includes the branches, foliage, and stems.

Tree Protection Order (TPO) - A legally enforceable document made by the local planning authority to protect trees and woodland in the interests of public amenity.

Urban Forest - Trees, woody shrubs, hedges, herbaceous plants, waterways, wildlife, grasses, and other green infrastructure.

Urban heat island effect - A phenomenon where air temperatures in urban areas are 2-10°F hotter than surrounding rural areas due to the high concentrations of buildings and pavement in urban areas.

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NORWICH
City Council

NORWICH City Council

Item 8

Committee Name: **Climate and Environment Emergency Executive Panel**

Committee Date: **10/06/2025**

Report Title: **General Update**

Portfolio: Councillor Hampton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate and Environment

Report from: Head of Strategy, Engagement and Culture

Wards: All Wards

OPEN PUBLIC ITEM

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update CEEEP on:

(i) Progress on the delivery of the current Environmental Strategy 2020-2025;

(ii) Progress on the delivery of the current Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2032; and

(iii) The development of the new *Climate Responsive Norwich Programme 2025-2035 (*hereafter *'CRN Programme 2025-2035'),* which is the proposed delivery plan for the 'A Climate Responsive Norwich' priority of the council's '*We Are Norwich 2024-2029*' community-led plan.

CEEEP is asked to note the progress undertaken and make comment on these updates.

Policy Framework

The Council's 2024-2029 community-led plan outlines five priorities. This report relates to the priority to create *A Climate Responsive Norwich* and fulfils the four related goals:

1. A Net Zero council by 2030;
2. A Net Zero Norwich by 2045;
3. Vibrant parks and green spaces; and
4. Adapting to climate change

The actions set out in this report also contribute to the other corporate plan policies of creating *A Future-Proof Norwich* and *A Prosperous Norwich*.

Report Details

1. The structure of this report has been changed to reflect the council's transition to a new way of structuring and reporting environmental activity. The transition reflects the replacement of its Environmental Strategy 2020-2025, during the 2025/26 financial year, with its new Climate Responsive Norwich Programme 2025-2035.

2. The Climate Responsive Norwich Programme 2025-2035 programme document identifies four main areas of strategic action, which are:

    a) Citywide climate action;

    b) Council General Fund (i.e. operational) climate action;

    c) Council Housing Revenue Account (i.e. social housing) climate action;

    d) Biodiversity improvement

3. This report is structured using the above main areas of strategic action, providing detail according to the new *climate action areas*, also set out in the Climate Responsive Norwich Programme 2025-2035, which are:

    a) Leadership and Coordination (including strategy and plan development);

    b) Finance;

    c) Communities;

    d) Homes and/or Buildings;

    e) Infrastructure;

    f) Transport;

    g) Waste, and

    h) Land Use and Emissions Removal

Citywide Climate Action – Update on Activity

Leadership and Coordination

4. *Climate Responsive Norwich Programme 2025-2035* – consultation and drafting of this scoping document is now complete. A final draft is being prepared which incorporates consultation feedback. The final version will be circulated to consultees during June 2025 and will then be used to structure, coordinate, communicate and report on the climate and biodiversity action of the council.

5. *Net Zero Pathway Plan for Norwich* – the council is developing a net zero pathway plan for Norwich in collaboration with the consultancy firm Opergy Net Zero and UK Power Networks. This innovative plan will set out net zero pathways for each sector in the city e.g. housing, transport, commercial & industrial, etc,

creating annual decarbonisation targets based on the Paris Agreement aligned SCATTER methodology, ultimately aiming for the city to be net zero by 2045. The plan will also set out, in broad terms, the sequenced actions required to meet the targets. Ideas and opinions received during the public consultation exercise held during February 2024, are informing the development of the plan.

The approach taken by the council ensures that UK Power Networks, who manage the city's electricity infrastructure, can import the sector targets directly into their future investment model. In this way UK Power Networks are accurately informed of the city's decarbonisation plan so they can ensure the city's networks are adequately strengthened for electrification of heat, transport and greater use of renewable energy and batteries. The methodology can be easily adapted so future iterations can accommodate boundary changes resulting from Local Government Reorganisation. Initial outputs of the pathway data modelling exercise are expected in the last week of May 2025.

6. *Sustainable Food Norwich CIC* – following COP26, the council became a signatory to the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration and has since supported Sustainable Food Norwich CIC to make an application for Norwich to become part of the Sustainable Food Places network, which was successful. Sustainable Food Norwich CIC are assisting the council in the early stages of developing a sustainable food action plan for the city, with the principles of this strategy being included in the Net Zero Pathway Plan for Norwich document, in the sections relating to the city's indirect emissions.

7. *New Supplementary Planning Documents* – the council is developing new supplementary planning documents (SPDs) to support the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP), in collaboration with South Norfolk and Broadland Councils. These new documents will outline to developers how to implement policies of the GNLP.

   The SPDs currently in production will support the implementation of Policy 2 in relation to Sustainability Statements covering issues such as water efficiency, energy generation, pollution, access to services and sustainable design; and Policy 3 to formally adopt the recently produced Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy and set out expectations for providing green infrastructure for new development to reduce visitor pressure on protected sites.

8. *Norfolk & Suffolk Energy Plan* – Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils are collaborating to produce a Norfolk and Suffolk Energy Plan. A budget of £200,000 has been allocated and a procurement exercise underway to find a suitable provider; by the time this report is published a supplier is expected to be appointed. The scope of the plan includes ensuring growth and decarbonisation can be accommodated by the energy networks of the two counties and alternative solutions considered where networks are unable to deliver energy where needed.

   The Norfolk and Suffolk Energy Plan also aims to unlock the barriers to community energy by tackling the challenges to community understanding, skills, trust and uptake of low carbon technologies in their communities.

The *Net Zero Pathway for Norwich* work reported in paragraph 5 above will feed into the Norfolk and Suffolk Energy Plan.

9. *Norfolk & Suffolk Water Strategy* – Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils are collaborating to produce an Integrated Water Strategy. Engagement regarding the scope of the strategy started in April 2025. The need for the strategy is evidenced by the water scarcity of the region, climate change impacts, growth and the need to retain business and create inward investment.

Finance

10. *City Science Retrofit Finance Workshop* – as part of the Norfolk Climate Change Partnership's (NCCP) activities around community energy, council officers recently participated in a workshop led by specialist consultancy City Science to explore retrofit finance options that local authorities across Norfolk could promote. The productive session focused on five potential options for further exploration. City Science are preparing more detailed plans and costings in relation to these finance options to facilitate further action by NCCP partners.

11. *Lendology Proposal* – the council met with representatives from Lendology CIC and has subsequently received a proposal for the delivery of services. Lendology, provide loan administration services on behalf of local authorities, to accelerate retrofitting in private sector housing. Lendology's service is one element of a retrofit accelerator loan scheme for residents in the city. The other element is the availability of a capital 'lump sum' (from which to disburse loans) regarding which the council is exploring a number of options.

Communities

12. *Big Community Switch* – the council is participating in the latest round of the 'Big Community Switch', organised by iChoosr. This is a collective energy purchasing scheme which offers households the opportunity to save money on their bills. Registration for Norwich residents opened on 12th May 2025 and will close on 28th July 2025. An auction with energy suppliers will be held on 24th June 2025 to identify the supplier able to offer the best deal to residents. Registered participants will then have until 1st August to accept their offer, if they choose to proceed. During the previous round in December 2024, 670 households registered across Norwich. The tariff offered through this scheme is always a 'green tariff' with energy supplied from 100% renewable energy sources. The council continues to participate in this scheme to promote affordable energy and alleviate fuel poverty as part of its Sustainable Warmth (fuel poverty) Strategy.

13. *Our Power* – Our Power community energy advice group are continuing to grow in capability and capacity. Following an event at St Stephen's Church on 27th of February 2025, Our Power have recruited additional volunteers to their steering group. Additionally, they are currently undertaking a recruitment process for a paid general manager, which is expected to help Our Power expand their activity considerably. Additional lottery funding of c£17,000 has been won and there are

currently six Energy Champions undertaking regular energy advice surgeries and home visits across the city. The council continues to work closely with Our Power to identify further opportunities for growth.

14. *Norwich Climate Commission Update* – Norwich Climate Commission is currently recruiting new volunteer Commissioners. Norwich Climate Commission acts as an independent critical friend and trusted expert adviser to the council, providing support in numerous ways. The Commission is made up of volunteers with either personal or professional subject matter knowledge and/or experience relating to the fields of climate, sustainability and biodiversity. The application process for new commissioners opened on 15th May and will close on 15th June 2025. Thereafter a transparent selection process will be undertaken to identify suitable candidates to join the Commission.

    Additionally, the Commission is recruiting to a part-time post via University of East Anglia (UEA) which will provide invaluable support in planning public engagement events and expanding the outreach of the Commission. It is expected this will lead to public engagement events on various topics such as water, community energy and sustainable transport, further engaging the communities of Norwich.

15. *Green Doctor Service* – Norwich's 'Green Doctor' service, provided by Groundwork East in partnership with the council, continues to provide free specialist advice to households experiencing fuel poverty. Since July 2024, the Green Doctor has completed 215 home visits in Norwich to provide energy consultations and to install free energy saving measures such as radiator reflector panels and draught-proofing. This is estimated to have saved 33.65 tonnes of CO2e to date. The service has recently received extra funding via National Energy Action (NEA) to deliver additional work including training sessions for health providers in the city to form new partnerships. Discussions are underway to increase resource, especially during the busy winter months, when waiting times for a Green Doctor consultation can be up to four weeks.

16. *Climate Ambassadors* – officers of the council helped to staff the Climate Ambassadors stand in 'The Explorium' at The Forum as part of Norwich Science Festival between 15-17 February 2025. Climate Ambassadors is a two-year project funded by the Department for Education as part of its Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy. It aims to connect educators to volunteers working in sustainability to help schools and colleges develop and deliver climate action plans. The event involved engaging with young people around issues of climate and biodiversity, as well as giving away packs of wildflower seeds to promote biodiversity. Over the course of the weekend over 200 engagements were made, including directly with decision makers at schools and colleges.

    The regional lead for Climate Ambassadors in the east of England is UEA, and council staff will continue to liaise with partners there to identify suitable opportunities to volunteer with local schools.

17. *Norfolk Net Zero Communities Project* – the ‘Net Zero Communities Project’, managed by Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP) and funded by Innovate UK, is reaching its conclusion in June 2025. The project has centred around close engagement with one community in each Norfolk district, Eaton being the Norwich community, to explore barriers to uptake of home retrofit measures, energy efficiency and sustainable transport. This project has yielded useful learning regarding barriers to sustainable behaviours, and the development of ‘persona’ archetypes which can guide approaches to engaging with residents based on their varying life circumstances.

    A full day co-production event will be held on 13th June 2025 at the Kings Centre in Norwich to present the project findings and enable discussion on its legacy and next steps. This event will be attended by council officers, portfolio holders, community representatives and other stakeholders.

    As part of the project’s final stages, a ‘Community Energy Roundtable’ event was undertaken at the Ipswich Road United Reformed Church in Eaton on 28th April 2025. This session was run in partnership with public participation specialists ‘Involve’. The session engaged with a focus group comprising members of the community, regarding aspects of energy to determine levels of existing community knowledge and the approaches local authorities should take to fill knowledge gaps.

    Building on the work of the project, NCCP has used a proportion of remaining project budget to commission energy advice tools which can be tested with the project’s communities, to determine how beneficial and effective they might be. This includes Homewise, Fairer Warmth, Solar Wizard and Mapping for Change. These on-line tools provide tailored recommendations about home energy and retrofit options based on information provided by homeowners about their dwellings. This action is aligned to one of the council’s objectives of providing a ‘digital retrofit hub’.

Buildings

18. *Warm Homes: Local Grant* – following an expression of interest (EOI) submitted to DESNZ in November, the funding allocation for the council was confirmed in February 2025. DESNZ have confirmed a grant of £4,745,409 to be delivered over three years with a possibility to extend the project by a further two years if sufficient funding is allocated in the government’s funding review. 100% of the funding is granted on the basis that no council co-funding is required.

    The project aims to improve 330 private sector homes over three years, with up to £15,000 available for each home to improve energy efficiency and a further £15,000 for low carbon heating solutions such as heat pumps.

    The scheme is in the mobilisation phase, with strong early signup to the scheme. The funding criteria have been summarised on a dedicated council webpage here:

(https://www.norwich.gov.uk/info/20608/energy_efficiency_and_reducing_energy_bills/4192/warm_homes_-_local_grant)

19. *Sustainable Warmth Competition Evaluation Study* – following completion in 2023 of this previous grant scheme for improving private sector homes, which saw 288 measures installed, the council commissioned a study to gain insight into scheme outcomes. The study looked at a number of technical and process related outcomes to understand how grant delivery performance can be improved. For example, people who signed up to the scheme but who didn't proceed to have works undertaken were interviewed to find out why they didn't proceed. Scheme participants who did proceed to the works phase were also interviewed to find out the opinions and attitudes towards the scheme. The study provides valuable insight to inform and improve the design of the latest Warm Homes: Local Grant scheme and future schemes.

20. *ECO4/GBIS Funding* – the council has an ongoing arrangement with FlexConnect which allows simpler access to the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) and Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS) grant funding schemes, benefitting residents in Norwich by funding energy saving improvements. This scheme allows for individual local authorities to have an 'LA Flex' arrangement, potentially making the funding available more widely than OFGEM's standard eligibility criteria. The council has created a new and updated 'LA Flex' statement to benefit as many residents in Norwich as possible.

    FlexConnect manage the administrative process of verifying householder eligibility and liaising with pre-vetted installers to deliver works under the schemes. FlexConnect also undertake quality control checking and report outcomes to the council. There are presently six installers registered with FlexConnect to undertake works in Norwich, with more expected to be onboarded soon.

    The council has briefed relevant partners such as the Green Doctor and Our Power community energy champions, who can refer households to FlexConnect. Residents can apply for this funding here https://www.flexconnect.eco/norwich

Infrastructure

Citywide Heat Networks – following the success of an initial £80,000 feasibility study, the council is pursuing funding for the next detailed stage of study which will determine the technical and commercial approach to developing heat networks in the city. A bid for £310,000 has been produced which will be submitted as soon as DESNZ's Heat Network Development Unit (HNDU) Round 15 funding window opens, expected in June. Council officers met with senior HNDU officers in May to discuss the bid and express its importance to Norwich.

21. *New Heat Network Regulation* – the council is preparing for new heat network regulations expected to start in April 2026. For the first time, the supply of heat will

become a regulated utility by Ofgem, in the same way that gas and electricity are regulated. As well as creating new consumer protection frameworks and technical standards, the regulations also aim to accelerate new heat network development by creating heat network development zones in cities. Norwich has been one of 27 cities which has taken part in 'zoning studies' run by DESNZ, which have created the knowledge base required to develop the new regulations.

22. *Citywide Electrical Infrastructure* – as well as the collaboration with UK Power Networks regarding decarbonisation (see paragraph 5 above), the council is collaborating with UK Power Networks to ensure the city's electricity infrastructure is sufficient to enable new development, as set out in the Greater Norwich Local Plan. According to Policy 2 of the Greater Norwich Local Plan, all new development is likely to be *electrified* i.e. use electricity as the primary heating fuel, rather than gas. This activity ensures development areas such as East Norwich are included in UKPN's future investment and strengthening models.

Transport

23. *Electric Vehicle Charge Point (EVCPs)* – the council is continuing to liaise with Norfolk County Council's EV infrastructure team and internal officers regarding an opportunity for a rapid EV Charge Point (EVCP) to be installed at Chantry car park on Theatre Street, utilising LEVI (Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) pilot funding.

    Other council car parks are also being considered for potential EVCP installations, including Sloughbottom Park as part of a regeneration project. In addition to funding available through Norfolk County Council, the council is exploring alternative funding models such as turnkey providers who provide fully funded end-to-end charge point service.

    The council continues to support Norfolk County Council's rollout of on-street charge points. All 46 on-street EVCPs have now been installed as planned under Phases 1-4, with the majority of these now operational. Further installations under Phase 5 are expected to commence later this year. A question was previously asked at CEEEP regarding the on-street charge point at Wingfield Road – it has been confirmed that this is now operational.

24. *Electric Buses Air Quality improvements* – air quality data has shown promising reductions in levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2) over the last year, believed to be due to the rollout of electric buses in the city. 70 zero-emission, battery electric buses were introduced by First Bus from March 2024, following funding received in partnership with Norfolk County Council from the Department for Transport. This enabled First Bus to electrify their highest use cross-city routes, accounting for almost two-thirds of bus journeys they operate through Castle Meadow. Further improvements in bus transport are expected, with the aim for 90% of buses in Norfolk to be low emission Euro 5, 6 or zero-emission models by 2027.

The council's continuous Air Quality Monitoring Station at Castle Meadow, together with all Diffusion Tubes across the city, have seen a reduction in NO_2 levels. The council's Environmental Protection Team produce an Air Quality Annual Status Report each year, a recent draft of which has been completed and is undergoing consultation with the Public Health and Highways departments at Norfolk County Council prior to submission to DEFRA by the end of June 2025. An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) was previously declared in 2012 due to exceedances of NO_2 criteria, and as such the reduction since observed is positive news. There were no exceedances of the NO_2 annual mean AQS objective within the AQMA during 2024.

Waste

25. *Waste Service Review* – the council is preparing its waste and recycling services to respond to changes required by the Environment Act 2021. The changes are set out below.

    Simpler Recycling - the purpose of the Simpler Recycling proposals are to standardise recycling services across the country. For example, all councils are now required to provide food waste collections to all households. In Norwich, this means that by April 2026, we will extend the existing service to the 8,500 non-council owned flats in the city which are not currently receiving this service. The council has set aside £0.3m in its capital programme for new vehicles (if required) and containers to support this expansion. Additionally, approximately £32,000 revenue and £18,000 capital funding from DEFRA will be received to support this. The council has worked closely with neighbouring authorities through the Norfolk Waste Partnership, to move towards a countywide approach to standardising the range of waste services that each council provides.

    Simpler Recycling also specifies which materials councils must collect, and the city council is well placed to meet these requirements. From April 2027, the council will be required to collect soft plastics and films, including plastic bags, wrappers and flexible packaging, from all households.

    Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging - the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (EPRP) shifts the cost of collecting and recycling packaging materials to producers, and ultimately consumers. It aims to encourage investment in recycling infrastructure by making packaging easier to collect and recycle. From 1 April 2025, producers have been paying into a scheme that covers the costs of local authority collection and processing services. In terms of the scheme, these services must be "efficient and effective", with further guidance expected on the meaning of "efficient and effective".

    Deposit Return Scheme - a Deposit Return Scheme will be introduced by all UK nations in October 2027. This will involve a deposit (likely 25p) being paid on all non-glass drinks containers between 150ml and three litres sold at retail outlets. The deposit will then be repaid to consumers on return of the container to any accredited return point (normally a reverse vending machine at a supermarket or

convenience store). This is expected to reduce the amount of waste collected by the council and reduce litter. It is expected that removal of higher value drinks containers from the council's waste stream may increase net processing costs, and the council is working with partners at NEWS Joint Venture to identify preferred medium and long-term options for materials processing.

Land Use and Emissions Removal

Nothing to Report (NTR)

Council General Fund Climate Action

Leadership and Coordination

26. *New Recruitment* – new posts are being recruited into the Environmental Strategy Team. These posts include 4 new full-time officers including a Retrofit Officer, Low-Carbon Infrastructure Officer, Environmental Projects Officer and an Energy and Water Manager. These positions will accelerate activity in all workstreams (citywide, general fund, and social housing).

27. *Procurement Emissions Plan* – as well as producing a net zero plan for the city (as reported in paragraph 5 above), the council is working towards a climate action plan for its General Fund (Operational) activities. As part of the GF climate action plan, the council is moving forward with a procurement emissions action plan, as part of an exercise to better understand its Scope 3 emissions. Specialist consultants have been appointed who will calculate the emissions resulting from the goods, services and works procured by the council, including its wholly owned businesses NCSL and Lion Homes. The insights gained from understanding procurement emissions will enable an action plan to be developed, to create a net zero pathway plan.

Finance

28. *Community Centre Finance* – council officers have met with a provider of green municipal loan schemes to discuss this approach for financing retrofit works to the council's 15 community centres. This exercise included reviewing case studies where similar schemes have been applied at other local authorities. Under such schemes, council's borrow money from the public to meet the cost of specific retrofit projects. This approach can provide mutual benefits for both the council and the public, who can each access interest rates preferable to alternative options.

    The council has additionally been exploring other retrofit finance options, for example as summarised in paragraphs 10 and 11, and through recent engagement with the National Wealth Fund (previously the UK Infrastructure Bank). During this financial year, the council expects to make a decision regarding

the preferred approach to creating an environmental investment scheme, and further updates will be brought to CEEEP accordingly.

Communities

29. *Green Events Code of Practice* – the council has previously participated in a pilot project to develop a Green Events Code of Practice (GECoP), for which a National Pilot Key Findings report was produced in February 2025. This project was co-run by Vision for Sustainable Events in partnership with the organisation Julie's Bicycle, and assessed 60 events across 10 local authorities according to consistent minimum environmental standards, to explore how effectively local authorities could integrate environmental assessment into event processes. The council is now exploring participation in Phase 2 of the GECoP project, which aims to work with a focus group of 3-5 cities to fully integrate GECoP into practice and processes, to inform a national adoption pathway and produce a toolkit of resources and case studies to support wider rollout.

Buildings and/or Homes

30. *Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF)* – the council has prepared a £75,000 bid for Phase 6 of this funding stream. The funding provides access to consultancy services for making technical and commercial plans to decarbonise heat in public sector buildings. All of the council's operational buildings were included in the bid but unfortunately it was announced in May that the government had decided not to fund Phase 6. The council is now exploring other options for funding this work.

31. *Riverside Leisure Centre Solar PV* – This capital project has progressed according to plan with a completion event booked for the 5th of June. The funder's grant was successfully spent within the required timescales and the project is running under budget.

32. *Community Centre Retrofit Programme* – retrofit options assessments have now been completed for all 15 community centres. Analysis of the findings show that the most effective use for the currently agreed funding is to improve insulation for walls and roofs. Further work has been undertaken to develop technical specifications for works, including insultation and renewable energy systems.

    An exercise is planned during 2025-2026 to establish further funding options taking the form of either council or municipal loans. This further funding will enable the installation, where viable, of further measures identified by the options assessments, such as PV systems and/or heat pumps.

Infrastructure

NTR

Transport

33. *Beryl minutes bundle for council staff* – to promote active sustainable travel to council staff, the council has purchased 100 x 100-minute bundles for free usage of the Beryl app for bicycle, e-bike and scooter journeys around the city. This has been promoted via the staff intranet and posters around City Hall. The minutes are available to download by both officers and councillors, using promotional code NCC100, when signed in on a Beryl account using an @norwich.gov.uk email address. There is a limit of 100 promotional downloads available at this time, based on observed uptake of the previous offer, this may be extended if needed.

34. *Cycle to Work Scheme* – further to a question raised during the previous CEEEP meeting, it is confirmed that the council participates in a 'Cycle to Work Scheme' through a provider called 'Cyclescheme'. Under this scheme, staff on the council payroll can purchase a bicycle or e-bike and associated equipment through a tax beneficial salary sacrifice arrangement, with instalments deducted from gross salary over a 12-month period. This can offer significant savings compared with purchasing the same equipment outside of the scheme. There is a £10,000 limit on equipment value. 2,600 retailers across the UK participate in the scheme, including 9 cycle shops located in Norwich.

Waste

NTR

Land Use and Emissions Removal

NTR

HRA Climate Action – Update on Activity

Leadership and Coordination

NTR

Finance

NTR

Communities

NTR

Buildings

35. *Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 2.2* – the council is delivering this £5.1m retrofit project in partnership with Eon Energy Solutions Ltd, over 2024-2025 and 2025-2026. This scheme is focused on Solar PV, as well as

loft insulation and external wall insulation. Of the target of 260 installations, 99 installations have already been completed with 34 in progress and 113 awaiting surveys. Tenant interest and sign-up continues to be strong, benefitting from positive outcomes from the previous scheme.

36. *Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (Wave 3) Funding Won* – previously known as the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 3, DESNZ confirmed an award to council in February of £12,042,657 to which council co-funding of £10,634,555 is being allocated, to create a project fund totalling £22,677,212.

    This three-year project aims to deliver 1333 solar PV systems, 147 air source heat pumps, and a ground source heat pump system for 24 dwellings.

37. *Low Rise Block Architypes Retrofit Options Studies* – a detailed pilot study of the council's 'MM' low rise architypes, comprising 348 dwellings across 27 blocks, has now been completed. The aim of the study was to (1) develop a methodology for understanding how to retrofit the council's low-rise blocks, and (2) test the council's evolving retrofit strategy.

    The brief for the study was to develop retrofit concept designs which (a) create net zero emission dwellings, (b) reduce energy cost for tenants compared to current gas fuelled heating, (c) have equitable positive outcomes for all dwellings in a block, and (d) minimise capital and operating cost to the council.

    The method developed includes modelling dwellings in an advanced thermal modelling application called PHPP which was developed for the Passivhaus approach to dwelling design. Although not aiming for Passivhaus standards, the modelling application is useful for understanding the benefits and costs of numerous retrofit measures, such as improvements to building fabric and renewable energy interventions. The method can also test the overheating risk of dwellings in their current form as well as following the addition of retrofit measures.

    Having developed retrofit options for the MM architypes, the council is now furthering this work by letting a contract to undertake retrofit options analysis for the remaining low rise block architypes, comprising a further 4681 dwellings. The results of this second tranche of work is expected in October 2025.

Infrastructure

38. *Heat Networks Update* – the HRA manages 29 district and communal heating schemes which serve around 2000 social housing dwellings. In light of the need to decarbonise heat networks, and proposed new consumer protection and technical regulations coming into effect April 2026 as described in paragraph 21, the council has now commissioned 4 studies to better understand how to move forward. Further studies will be commissioned during this financial year.

Transport

NTR

Waste

NTR

Land Use and Emission Removal

NTR

Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2032 – Update on Activity

Leadership and Coordination

39. *Trees for Norwich - A 10-Year Management Plan* – appended to this report as a draft for consultation with CEEEP, this plan reaffirms the council's ongoing commitment to responsible tree management and to protect, maintain and enhance the city's canopy cover. The plan sets out the council's approach to the management of trees on its own land for the overall benefit of the city, its residents, employers and visitors. It also describes how this commitment will be delivered and measured. Any feedback from CEEEP members is requested by the 4 July 2025, to be considered for inclusion in the final draft of the plan. Feedback is to be directed to the Environmental Services Manager for Parks and Open Spaces.

    Norwich City Council manages thousands of trees growing in the city, which are an essential part of the environment and vital to healthy urban living. These trees are found within many of the council's parks and open spaces and large areas of woodland that we manage directly.

    Trees provide a number of 'ecosystem services', including clean air, biodiversity, shading, flood mitigation, noise reduction, aesthetic benefits and contributing to health and wellbeing. They also sequester carbon dioxide and contribute to mitigating climate change. It is therefore central to the management approach that they are not simply considered individually as aesthetic objects but recognised as a key element of the city's green infrastructure essential to the quality of life in Norwich.

40. *Nature Towns and Cities bid* – The council has convened a new nature recovery partnership with Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Norfolk County Council and South Norfolk and Broadland (SN&B) Councils to bid for £0.764m for a 3-year nature recovery planning project called *NatureCityNorwich*. The project focuses on the whole of the urban area of Norwich. If the funding bid is successful, NatureCityNorwich will co-create an ambitious community-led urban nature recovery action plan to connect and benefit nature, people and place. A comprehensive spatial map will be produced identifying nature heritage under threat, the city's 'nature gaps',

opportunities to develop safe and accessible routes to nature and new ‘doorstep’ nature-rich spaces. The plan gives a voice to and prioritises communities most in need.

All residents, community groups, asset owners, land-managers, contractors and influencers will be listened to and included through extensive, inclusive engagement. The project will establish new ways of doing things including developing innovative blended nature finance models, nature-friendly grounds maintenance schemes and new nature recovery measurement and reporting methods.

A plan of interconnected ‘pipeline projects’ will be developed as will be the conditions for a truly sustainable and inclusive urban nature recovery network. The plan protects heritage at risk, creates the potential for new nature spaces and improves community resilience, health and wellbeing across the city.

The project creates an integrated implementation plan which includes the objectives of council’s Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2032, the evolving Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk and the recently launched Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy.

The funding does not pay for capital projects, but instead aims to establish new ways of funding nature recovery including through Natural England’s green token scheme, Biodiversity Net Gain, carbon sequestration, corporate Environment Social and Governance funding, etc.

The project aims to reduce grounds maintenance costs for the council’s involved, and at the same time improve biodiversity and outcomes for communities.

41. *Nature Towns and Cities (NTC) Scheme Accreditation* – the Accreditation Scheme runs in parallel with the Nature Towns & Cities funding bid but is a separate initiative open to all towns and cities. NTC accreditation will be piloted in England from Spring 2025, aiming to reassure funders and investors that accredited towns and cities are fully prepared to implement green infrastructure improvements.

    To achieve accreditation, a city needs to meet the criteria including actions under such headings as *Setting your vision* and *Building Strong Partnerships*. *The Level One: Foundation* accreditation process has commenced for the *NatureCityNorwich* partnership, with the relevant documents being submitted this year.

    To achieve accreditation, local authorities and community organisations must demonstrate:

    - Community empowerment and participation
    - Effective leadership
    - Cross-sector partnerships
    - Comprehensive improvement and investment plans

42. *Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) mapping* – the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, led by the Norfolk and Suffolk Nature Recovery Partnership, is in the 'public consultation' phase which is open until Wednesday 11 June 2025. For the Norfolk consultation and survey visit www.norfolk.gov.uk/naturerecovery

    This LNRS is one of 50 being developed throughout the country by each local responsible authority. Together they will create a UK wide nature recovery network of sites to enhance and conserve nature. Individual authorities have consulted widely and mapped their locally prioritised species and habitats.

43. *Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy (GNGIS) launch* – the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy, developed by the Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB) was launched in May 2025. Green Infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green and blue (water/waterways) routes and spaces for people and nature.

    Developed with input from a broad range of internal and external stakeholders, this strategy is a culmination of extensive collaboration and provides a flexible framework for guiding and prioritising the most suitable types, locations and scale of green infrastructure needed to support future growth, alongside health and wellbeing, biodiversity and climate resilience. The GNGIS can be found here: https://www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/article/67059/Green-Infrastructure-Strategy

44. *Norwich Biodiversity Baseline Study (BBS)* – produced in 2023 by Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS), this study provides a detailed resource, collating existing data on biodiversity in Norwich with an assessment of the opportunities and threats to species and habitats. Until recently, this was only available as a report with the city-wide mapping of the data at a low resolution. The biodiversity mapping in the report is now available as a digital resource mapped on to Local View for officers to use. This availability of this data assists the development of nature recovery planning and action.

Finance

45. *Nature Finance Models* – the council's recent bid to the Nature Towns & Cities Fund (described in paragraph 40) includes a proposal to explore innovative financing models for nature recovery. This could include blended finance options facilitated by the project partnership, in addition to newly developed approaches such as Natural England's 'Green Tokens', Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), new approaches to carbon sequestration and Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) funding from corporations.

Communities

46. *New Biodiversity Monitoring and Surveying Course* – a two-day ecology course has been co-developed between the council and Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT), to

be held initially on 19 and 24 June 2025, with NWT ecologists leading the training. The course is free to members of the public and local groups have been contacted through the council's volunteer networks. The course aims for participants to develop new skills in plant identification, site assessment and recording for flora across all biodiverse sites to identify either good or poor habitat conditions.

The course has been developed in response to requests from local volunteer groups to understand more about their local community green spaces. Additionally, it fulfils the council's duty to conserve and enhance protected sites, through measuring and monitoring the biodiversity.

47. *'Mousehold to the Marsh'* (MttM) – the council has helped fund and supported with officer time The Common Lot's development of this community theatre project focused on nature and climate. The concept underpinning MttM is closely aligned to the council's Biodiversity Strategy, the principle of an urban Nature Recovery Networks, and the council's recent funding bid '*NatureCityNorwich'* (see paragraph 40).

    MttM was co-developed during a six-month period of citizen-group research towards and will be performance in a series of live shows across 8 green spaces and parks. The council engaged with the research, collaboration and networking phase of the project on walks and group/public meetings.

    Performances will take place between 2-13 July 2025 at green spaces across north Norwich, including Mousehold Heath, Kett's Heights, Sloughbottom Park, Waterloo Park, Wensum Park, St Clements Park, Peterson Park, and Marlpit Community Gardens. A legacy programme is being developed in partnership with the council, community and climate emergency groups.

Homes and/or Buildings

48. *Back Garden Nature pilot project* – the 'Back Garden Nature' project aims to improve biodiversity in selected back gardens in the council's social housing estate and work has commenced on the first HRA 'Back Garden Nature' site.

    The council is funding a pilot project for a small number of sites, with varied management approaches to be trialled according to garden type. Appropriate sites were visited in May to assess suitability for inclusion in the pilot project. The project is co-managed by Housing Tenancy, Fringe Projects Manager and Biodiversity Strategy Officer.

    The scheme seeks to find cost saving solutions which also improve biodiversity in gardens which are underused and/or untended. Tenants are being offered the opportunity to pass management responsibilities for their gardens back to the council. The properties primarily targeted are maisonette style dwellings with large back gardens.

The spaces will be managed for the benefit of nature, as ‘micro nature reserves’ providing year-round refuge, creating a mosaic of biodiverse habitats and overwintering sites for birds, mammals and invertebrates. Waste material is retained on site to construct additional habitats. In the longer-term the intention is for these sites to be managed by community groups with a ‘light-touch’ ongoing involvement from the council and Norwich Fringe Project.

Infrastructure

49. *UEA Yare Valley Boardwalk* – this active travel and nature access route is currently closed due to disrepair. The riverside route forms part of the Yare Valley Walk between Strawberry Fields and UEA Broad. The UEA is leading a project to reconstruct the boardwalk with support from Norwich Fringe and council. Two consultation events have taken place, on 9 May 2025 at Bob Champion Research Park and on 13 May 2025 at the Willow Centre, Cringleford.

Transport

NTR

Waste

NTR

Land Use and Emissions Removal

50. *Replacement and New Tree Planting* – a number of updates on relevant tree planting sites are provided below:

    a) Heartsease Recreation Ground – A 10m x 10m extension to the existing Miyawaki project comprising 300 new trees has been planted. Additionally, two new wildflower areas linking the Miyawaki have been created, with a total area of approximately 78 m^2. An annual and perennial wildflower mix was sown into prepared ground in early spring.

    This recreation ground site has potential to be a pilot for additional biodiversity measures, including a native mixed hedge. This is being investigated in collaboration with NCSL and the Fringe Project and Parks Team. Native hedges are now listed as a ‘priority habitat’ under the NERC Act (2006) as it is widely recognised that they have high ecological value. Hedge numbers have declined rapidly in the last century.

    b) The site presents the opportunity to create a model to deliver a coherent approach to multi-functional green space where land can be maintained for sport and recreation whilst improving ‘doorstep’ biodiversity and enhancing appearance.

c) Netherwood Green woodland – the wood has been planted with 300 young trees to increase the scale of the wood and promote age-diversity across the Norwich tree stock. This was managed with Norwich Fringe with support from TCV.

d) Charter Wood – maintenance of the young trees recently planted trees has been undertaken to ensure they establish well, and coppicing of older stock to ensure longevity and strong growth. This was managed with Norwich Fringe with support from TCV.

e) Marlpit Wood – the wood has been planted with 300 young trees (as bare-rooted whips and donated container-grown trees) to increase the scale of the wood and promote age-diversity across the Norwich tree stock. This was managed with Norwich Fringe with support from TCV.

Financial and Resources

51. There are no direct financial/resource implications of this report.

Legal

52. There are no direct legal implications of this report.

Statutory Considerations

Consideration	**Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:**
Equality and Diversity	The activities, measures, and recommendations outlined in this report will contribute to improving equality in Norwich.
Health, Social and Economic Impact	The activities, measures, and recommendations outlined in this report will have positive health, social and economic impacts.
Crime and Disorder	NA
Children and Adults Safeguarding	NA
Environmental Impact	The activities, measures, and recommendations outlined in this report will all contribute to reducing Norwich's emissions, supporting biodiversity, and/or supporting Norwich's vulnerable residents.

Risk Management

Risk	**Consequence**	**Controls Required**
NA	NA	NA

Other Options Considered: NA

Reasons for the decision/recommendation: NA

Background papers: NA

Appendices:

Trees for Norwich – A 10-Year Management Plan, draft for consultation

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