

**Report to** Sustainable development panel  
17 July 2019  
**Report of** Head of planning services  
**Subject** Development Framework Strategy for UEA

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**Item**

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### **Purpose**

To consider the Development Framework Strategy (2019 refresh) for the University of East Anglia.

### **Recommendation**

To note the emerging Development Framework Strategy for the University of East Anglia (2019) to form part of the evidence base for the Greater Norwich Local Plan, which will be publicly consulted upon as part of the Regulation 18 consultation expected later in 2019.

### **Corporate and service priorities**

The report helps to meet the corporate priority Inclusive economy

### **Financial implications**

None

**Ward/s:** University but with wider impacts

**Cabinet member:** Councillor Stonard - Sustainable and inclusive growth

### **Contact officers**

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### **Background documents**

None



# Report

## Context:

1. In November 2010 the first Development Framework Strategy (DFS) for the University of East Anglia was endorsed. This provided a useful framework and successful planning tool for the University, Norwich City Council and other stakeholders. It was also used to inform site allocations in Norwich City Council's Local Plan (2014) and formed part of the UEA's Development Strategy for 20-30 years.
2. The DFS 2010 has enabled growth of the campus and delivery of a number of significant developments including the student residences at the former Blackdale School site, the refurbishment of Earlham Hall and the development of the Enterprise Centre on the former City Care depot. Most of the development sites identified in the previous DFS and allocated within the Local Plan have now been built out.
3. Furthermore updated student numbers have risen more rapidly than previously projected and updated projections are available. A total of 17,955 students attended the UEA in the 2017/18 academic year. The UEA's growth strategy is to grow to 22,000 students by 2036. As such the DFS now requires review 8 years into 20-30 year strategy.
4. The Development Framework Strategy 2019, available [here](#), is a refresh of the document to reflect and develop UEA's Vision 2030. It has been produced by consultants working for UEA working closely with City Council Officers. It is intended to be used as part of the evidence base informing preparation of the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) to provide planning framework to guide UEA's development requirements for period up to 2036.
5. The UEA and its students have many positive economic impacts for Norwich, boosting the city's national and international profile, providing local companies with skilled graduates, and purchasing local goods and services. In addition the universities have an important role to play in delivering a creative city as part of the emerging Norwich 2040 City Vision. The DFS document highlights the importance of the UEA to Norwich and the wider region covering a multitude of factors including Economic, Social, Educational, Community Involvement and research.
6. The Norwich Research Park along with the UEA are viewed as an integral element of the Tech Corridor. The two world class universities within the Tech Corridor (UEA & University of Cambridge) will 'feed' the Tech Corridor through the education of the next generation of innovative scientists and business leaders through the delivery of cutting edge research.
7. Norwich City Council is currently consulting on the "Purpose-built student accommodation in Norwich: Evidence and best practice advice note" which has been drafted in response to increasing higher education student numbers in Norwich and recent rise in planning applications for Purpose-Built Student Accommodation. The consultation is currently underway and it is anticipated that following report back to Sustainable Development Panel in September it will be reported to Cabinet in October.

**Process:**

8. Work commenced on the updated DFS in mid-2018 with a series of working groups and meetings including Officers from Norwich City Council, South Norfolk District Council, Greater Norwich Local Plan team and Transport Officer from Norfolk County Council, Members of Norwich City Council, representatives from the UEA & Bidwells acting as their agents.
9. The process to refresh the DFS assessed the need for growth, tested different options for accommodating it, and translated this into preferred development areas, with a suggested policy approach to help inform the preparation of the Greater Norwich Local Plan.
10. The UEA growth strategy has informed a quantifiable need for additional floorspace required to achieve this. Options for delivering growth were considered, including development/expansion off campus, before evaluating site options using a matrix scoring system. The site scoring system informed draft revisions of the DFS which have been discussed and refined through a series of subsequent working group meetings.

**Purpose:**

11. The aim of this report is to seek member endorsement of the DFS ("link") as part of the evidence base for the Greater Norwich Local Plan and subsequent relevant Local Plan documents.

**Summary:**

12. In order to accommodate the UEA's plan to increase student numbers to 22,000 by 2036, it will be necessary to provide approximately 62,175sqm of additional academic, student and student welfare accommodation, this equates to approximately 9.4 hectares. This is broken down as follows:

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|--|--------|
| a) Academic floorspace (inc. 20% contingency): | 34,315 |
| b) Student Accommodation:                      | 25,000 |
| c) Student Welfare:                            | 2,860  |

13. The 2010 document previously identified five possible scenarios for single-campus growth, which remain relevant moving forward into the 2019 refresh document:

- Intensification of existing uses
- Demolition and rebuilding at a higher density
- Infill of under used and undeveloped areas
- New development locations within UEA's ownership/control and within approximately 500m/five minutes walking distance of the Registry building; and
- A combination of some or all of the above.

14. The emerging draft of the revised DFS proposes development of four sites on campus within five minutes' walk of the registry building to meet the future needs on campus. The sites are:
- i) Walled Garden & Former Nursery Site of Earlham Hall; (approximately 5,000sqm of additional floorspace for B1a, B1(b), D1 and associated uses)
  - ii) Congregation Hall; (approximately 8,800sqm of additional floorspace for higher density campus redevelopment 3-5 storeys tall including a larger high-quality congregation facility)
  - iii) Land between Suffolk Walk & Bluebell Road; (approximately 29,000sqm of additional floorspace to complete the southern part of the campus appropriate to the Lasdun masterplan for university related development including some student residential accommodation)
  - iv) Grounds Depot Site (approximately 10,500sqm of additional floorspace for student accommodation use)
15. Decisions on whether or not to reflect these proposals in the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan will be taken by Cabinet following consideration of the emerging plan by the Greater Norwich Development Partnership. Initial consideration had been expected at a GNDDP meeting planned for 17<sup>th</sup> July but this has now postponed and is expected to be rescheduled shortly. It should be noted that even if the case for the above developments is accepted it is possible that not all will be considered to need allocation within the Greater Norwich Local Plan, for example the Congregation Hall is a currently developed site within the defined University Campus boundary, as such it is unlikely to be necessary to allocate this site as development for academic use is acceptable in principle in this location.
16. It is acknowledged in the report that the University will be unable to facilitate sufficient student accommodation (residences) on campus to support its growth plans. Whilst there are plans for some new accommodation to be built on campus, the framework proposes that residences which cannot be accommodated on campus to be developed within the City Centre. This is consistent with the content of the document on purpose built student accommodation that is currently undergoing consultation.
17. The proposed developments within the framework include sites within the UEA's ownership, but which fall outside of the campus boundary as defined in the existing adopted Development Management policy DM26. The DFS proposes an extension of the campus boundary to the south to include grounds depot site and north west to include Earlham Hall sites including existing enterprise centre

## **Conclusion:**

18. The next stage is for the refreshed draft DFS to form part of evidence base to inform allocation of UEA sites within the Greater Norwich Local Plan regulation 18 consultation documentation. The consultation is currently anticipated to commence later in 2019.

19. Once the consultation period has completed and necessary amendments are presented, the final DFS will be reported to cabinet for endorsement.
20. Following the final endorsement of the DFS the document will be a material consideration for relevant planning applications.