

# Greater Norwich Development Partnership

Jobs, homes, prosperity for local people



## GNDP Newsletter: Spring 2009

Welcome to the latest newsletter from the Greater Norwich Development Partnership, giving updates on the latest developments on work to prepare the area for future jobs and housing growth.

### Recent Highlights

It has been a busy few months at GNDP as we have been calling on residents to take part in our consultation on delivering new homes in the area, as well as welcoming the possibility of new funding for a major transport development.

#### Joint Core Strategy Consultation

Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council are working together with Norfolk County Council to develop a shared strategy for the future of the local area over the next 20 years. This will become the 'Joint Core Strategy' (JCS) – a document that will set out the area's growth plans, guiding planning and development to 2026 and beyond. Over the past two months we have been consulting with local people on how these plans could take shape.

We would like to warmly thank everyone who took the time to take part in the public consultation. Many local people visited exhibitions and took part in the online consultation. The high turnout indicated how strongly local people care about the future of all three districts.

#### Deadline extended

Because of its importance to peoples' lives across the area we want to make sure as many people as possible have the opportunity to comment on the draft joint core strategy or the sustainability appraisal. We would especially like to encourage people to take part who might have felt they did not have enough time.

The new deadline is 5pm on Friday 12 June 2009.

We will begin the process of analysing responses, which will be collated into a report available on the GNDP website by July.

For more information on the Joint Core Strategy consultation contact Paul Rao at Norwich City Council: [paulrao@norwich.gov.uk](mailto:paulrao@norwich.gov.uk)



#### GNDP has moved

In early April we moved into our new office space at Charles House, in the centre of Norwich. From now on all post should be sent to:

Greater Norwich Development Partnership  
PO Box 3466  
Norwich, NR7 7NX

## Update: Postwick Hub Community Infrastructure Fund

The Government has announced that the GNDP's bid for a £21 million share of the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) scheme to pay for the 'Postwick Hub' project has been successful – pending the progress of Norwich's Northern Distributor Road (NDR).



The Government has linked final approval for the CIF grant for the Postwick Hub to its assessment of the business case for the NDR which it expects to have completed in September.

The Postwick Hub project is an essential part of the areas growth plans, delivering improvements to the A47 interchange and radically expanding existing park and ride facilities.

GNDP members have given a cautious welcome to the news.

**Cllr Steve Morphew, Leader of Norwich City Council and GNDP Chairman, said:**

"While disappointed that the funding will not be immediately available, £21m is still on the table for the Postwick Hub.

"The Department for Transport has said that it will use 'best endeavours' to complete its assessments by September, and can be assured of our full cooperation in meeting that deadline. It is important that we are able to start as soon as possible – this is a fantastic opportunity for the Government to make an early response to the economic downturn."

**Cllr Daniel Cox, Leader of the County Council, said:**

"We welcome the Government's assurance that the Postwick Hub will proceed if the NDR gains a firm place in the future programme, but we remain concerned that six months' delay could start to stretch even further. We will be seeking

assurances from the Government that this timetable will be met.

"The Government wants the Postwick Hub development to be more closely tied in to the Northern Distributor Road approval process, but the need for capacity improvements at the Postwick junction is now. This is why we have, through the Greater Norwich Development Partnership, pulled out all the stops to meet the tight timescales demanded by the Government to secure CIF funding.

"A delayed start will be a blow to the developers and house builders who cannot push forward with plans to bring more jobs and housing to the east of Norwich and Thorpe St Andrew until the capacity of the Postwick A47 junction has been improved. It will also hold up expansion of the Postwick Park & Ride site."

**Cllr John Fuller, Leader of South Norfolk Council, said he could not understand why the Government would want any delay.**

"The Postwick Hub project will give a major boost to the local economy, creating an estimated 80 new construction jobs immediately and thousands more following once the work is finished."

**Cllr Simon Woodbridge, Leader of Broadland District Council, said:**

"We are confident we will see the funding materialise in the Autumn, which is very encouraging news for the future of the Broadland Business Park. We recognise there is still a lot to do in delivering locally but this investment will help to get us over the effects of the recession."



For more information on the Postwick Hub CIF bid contact Mike Jackson at Norfolk County Council: [mike.jackson@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:mike.jackson@norfolk.gov.uk)

### Greater Norwich Economic Strategy

As the recession begins to bite it will undoubtedly have an impact on growth and development in greater Norwich. To help meet this challenge, the GNDP has been developing an economic strategy.

The economic strategy is a five year plan from 2009-2014. It is designed to complement a range of national and regional strategies to create sustainable growth for local communities and enhance the area's quality of life.



This strategy focuses on the benefits that the Greater Norwich area has to offer and proposes ideas on how to drive the local economy forward up to 2014. It outlines strategic objectives in order to attract investment and maximise opportunity for all sections of the local community.

The GNDP has worked closely with a number of stakeholders and local partners to identify key issues to manage the sustainable growth of the area.

The final strategy document will be available on the GNDP website this summer.



For more information on the greater Norwich Economic Strategy contact Chris Starkie at Shaping Norfolk's Future:

[chris.starkie@shapingnorfolksfuture.org](mailto:chris.starkie@shapingnorfolksfuture.org)

### Rackheath eco-community

In June 2007 the Government announced its ambition for a series of eco-towns to be built across the country. Many locations were put forward, but Rackheath emerged as the most viable location for an eco-town proposal in the country.

The proposal offers a range of benefits lacking in other eco-town proposals:

- The site is being promoted for development by a consortia of landowners, which provides certainty that the plans will be delivered
- The site is included in all options that are being considered for comprehensive development within the strategic planning framework for the area
- In accordance with strategic planning objectives, the site lends itself to being serviced by improved public transport corridors
- The site is in close proximity to an operational railway line, with station access
- The site is in close proximity to existing and planned areas for employment growth
- The site is well located for access to the retail and cultural offer of Norwich
- The general location has already been subject to public consultation through the issues and options stage of the joint core strategy process



Over the coming months a number of workshops and public meetings will be taking place to allow local people to learn more about the Rackheath eco-community.

Full details of these and more information about the proposals can be found at:  
[www.rackheatheco-community.com](http://www.rackheatheco-community.com)

## Spotlight Projects

The GNDP supports and contributes to a wide range of projects helping to provide a bright future for current and future residents in the area. Here are details of three of these projects.

### Wensum River Parkway

**This project is based in the City of Norwich and aims to demonstrate the benefits of regenerating the area around the river for recreational and cultural purposes.**

The River Wensum is in many ways a 'forgotten asset' that buildings have turned their back on but in recent years the regeneration of old industrial land along the river banks has focussed attention on the river and seen it as a real asset in terms of visual amenity, recreation and wildlife. Since the 1960's the City Council has gradually been constructing a riverside walk along practically the entire length of the river from Carrow to Hellesdon.

In a recent report, the Norwich Society, supported by the Norwich Heritage Economic & Regeneration Trust (HEART), proposed a Wensum River Parkway, aimed at revitalising the riverside in the City centre between New Mills (the head of navigation) and Whitlingham Country Park, a distance of some three miles.

The Parkway will be a linear cultural space; free for all to enjoy, narrowing to a bank-side footpath in places, then widening out to green spaces and urban squares. It will redefine the significance of

the River Wensum to the growth and prosperity of Norwich.

The project is a joint venture between the Norwich Society, Norwich HEART and the City Council. £75,000 is allocated from the Growth Fund to kick-start a demonstration project in the Bishop Bridge / Pull's Ferry area. Access to the river will be improved, together with new signage and interpretation.

The concept will be branded with a new logo to give the project an identity and a virtual reality 'fly-through' of the river along the Parkway will help to explain the project to potential sponsors and bring in additional funding.

In the longer term it is hoped to make best use of the city section of the Wensum by establishing this Parkway identity as a unifying concept for city centre business, residential and tourist development.

**For more information on the Wensum River Parkway Project contact George Ishmael at Norwich City Council**

[georgeishmael@norwich.gov.uk](mailto:georgeishmael@norwich.gov.uk)



## Spotlight Projects

### IFR2 Innovation Centre

The Institute of Food Research 2 (IFR2) is an office/ laboratory refurbishment and refit innovation centre project set at Norwich Research Park (NRP), one of Europe's largest single-site concentrations of research in Health, Food and Environmental Sciences.

The IFR2 Innovation centre has existed as an aspiration of the NRP partners since early 2007, driven by a combination of new spin-out and start-up companies and the expansion of companies already on the NRP. The project will see the refurbishment and upgrading of an existing £10m building on the IFR site within the NRP estate. The building currently stands empty. A significant amount of preparatory work has already been undertaken in costing and scoping the work, with specifications agreed.

A total capital cost of £4.9 million has been pledged for this project and GNDP will be contributing £1 million of this total. Other significant contributions will be made by EEDA and the current owner of the building, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC). The balance will be generated by an agreement with the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital who have agreed to provide a substantial capital sum through an upfront payment of their rent as anchor tenant.

Once the building has been refurbished, the centre will be economically sustainable through its own revenue.



The project will provide over 30,000 square feet of combined laboratory and office space for a range of companies and organisations including early stage companies and SMEs which are seen as vital to stimulating an enterprise culture on the NRP. It will deliver a combination of additional incubation space, follow-on-space for the already full NRP bio-incubator and space for an anchor tenant,



identified as The Microbiology Department of the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital which has already committed to rent a whole floor of the building.

IFR2 will further contribute to the critical mass at NRP and improve the regional 'pull' of the site in attracting companies to take-up residence at NRP. The unique research base and establishment of NRP-Enterprise means that an increasing number of companies are likely to wish to locate to the NRP. Independent study has shown that the realisation of the total allocated NRP site (as per the South Norfolk NRP Development Brief) will deliver around 5 000 jobs by 2021 – the completed Innovation Centre has been profiled within the study to deliver approximately 500 of these jobs within the planned period.

The project will:

- Provide additional employment space for hundreds of new jobs at NRP
- Provide follow on space for existing companies currently in the incubation process
- The formation and establishment of new life-science-based companies
- Interaction space for existing NRP organisations to work alongside new companies
- Inform the decisions to be made for the construction of the new Innovation Centre
- Provide space for organisations looking to locate to the NRP for whom there is currently no available accommodation

For more information on the IFR2 project contact James Bowell at GNDP: [j.bowell@gndp.org.uk](mailto:j.bowell@gndp.org.uk)

## Spotlight Projects

### Whitlingham Country Park

The GNDP has recently funded improvement works to footpaths in Whitlingham Country Park as part of the green infrastructure element of the partnership.

The GNDP has given £120,000 to fund major improvements to several footpaths and improve access for people with disabilities and parents with small children in buggies.

Created following the extraction of gravel by La Farge which has been used in many major construction projects across Norfolk, the park has been developed by the Whitlingham Charitable trust and is managed by the Broads Authority.

Being ideally located on the southern outskirts of Norwich, Whitlingham Country Park attracts many thousands of visitors every year who wish to learn about the park in the visitor centre or by following one of the guided trails, relax in the café or take part in the many different activities provided by Norfolk County Council's outdoor education centre.

The work was linked to a second improvement project to the boat park and launching facilities at the outdoor education centre. This aspect of the work costing £180,000 was jointly funded by the Big Lottery and Norfolk County Council Children's Services and carried out by May Gurney.

Work on site started in early January during the worst of the snow. The emergency access lane was re-graded, followed by a new footpath linking the great broad to the car park at the eastern end of the park.

The footpath from the little broad car park between the two broads to the outdoor education centre is estimated to be the most used path in the Broads National Park and was in very poor condition. Consequently detailed work to reduce gradients and improve levels was undertaken before finishing with an asphalt and gravelled surface sympathetic to the country park setting.

Finally, approximately 1200m of the footpath along the north shore of the great broad was improved.

The project which was completed on time and in budget, has been universally welcomed by park visitors for whom access has been greatly improved.

Russell Wilson, Country Park Manager said "Without the support of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership this work would not have been possible and on behalf of the Whitlingham Charitable Trust I would like to thank all those involved."

**For more information on the Whitlingham Country Park contact Paul Hoey at Norfolk County Council**

[paul.hoey@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:paul.hoey@norfolk.gov.uk)



## Local views

The new GNDP website features a range of views from people across the three districts, many of which will be featured in this newsletter.

### Ray Walpole, local resident.

I have lived in the Plumsteads area for over 14 years. It's easy to forget how distinctive the greater Norfolk landscape is, but I try not to take the countryside for granted. Just under two hours from London, its natural beauty is a world away from the hustle and bustle of city life. Here you find traditional historic buildings, long winding roads waiting to be explored, and a range of nature reserves and heritage walks just full of fascinating bird and plant life unique to this part of the world.

The Norfolk landscape is very diverse; it spans woodland, marshland, farmland, wetland and heathland. A leisurely stroll through Whitlingham Park gives you a glimpse of rare birds such as the heron and cormorant. Birdwatching, walking, and cycling are all here to enjoy.

The best way to immerse yourself in the tranquillity of the Norfolk countryside is to take on some of the many circular walks on offer. Information is readily available at the Forum's Tourist Information Centre, council offices or libraries. In fact, every Saturday our region's newspaper, the Eastern Daily Press, suggests a walk, with information on village pubs and car parking. Another outlet is the Norwich Fringe which publishes relaxing cycling routes and healthy walks.

But all too often, the fantastic opportunities are not taken up. How many more people would be able to enjoy them if access from their homes to the countryside was improved?

Mention new development and some people assume the environment is going to suffer. But if things are managed well then badly needed new homes and environmental improvements can go hand in hand. For example local people have reaped the rewards of improved access to Catton Country Park, which GNDP has opened up for visitors.

As Britain's largest protected wetland, the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads are teeming with plant and animal habitats, some of which are rarely seen elsewhere. There are dozens of Nature Reserves across the county, and even those with no



experience of ecology will take pleasure in the expansive greenery of this unique part of the world.

Of course, the local environment goes hand in hand with the global one.

The Eco-community plan for Rackheath, proposed by GNDP, is now the most viable proposal of its type in the country. This is a great achievement for Norfolk and should set the tone for other development in the area. We should look at how to use district cycle routes from the city centre to larger developments, so people can get to work in a sustainable and healthy way. Linking Norwich Riverside Walk from the rail station and its surrounding employment areas to Whitlingham Park would also open up work and leisure connections for all.

Everyone should be able to enjoy the natural beauty of the greater Norfolk countryside. For while new homes and jobs are important, we also need to protect our local and global environment. Change can be a force for good. We need to work with it and find ways in which environmental benefits can not only be retained, but enhanced. In this way, GNDP is providing a green legacy for the future.

Ray Walpole is an 81 year old active walker and cyclist. He is a member of the statutory Norfolk and the Broads Local Access Forums, the Countryside Officer for the Norfolk Area Ramblers Association and a member of Norwich Cycling Campaign. Ray is also a Norwich City fan.

This article is written in a personal capacity.

**If you would like to submit your own 'Local View' please email [info@gndp.org.uk](mailto:info@gndp.org.uk)**

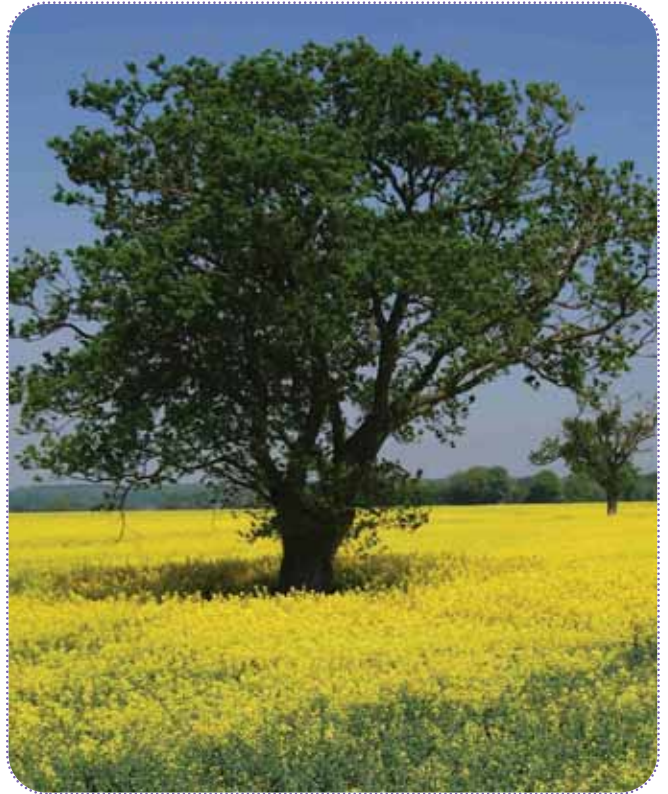
We do receive a high volume of these so cannot guarantee featuring them all but are interested in hearing your thoughts.

## Contact GNDP

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