

Navigation Committee

13 January 2022

Agenda item number 8

East Norwich Masterplan

Report by Head of Planning

Purpose

This report introduces the development of Stage 1 of the masterplan for East Norwich, which will be the subject of a briefing to members from Graham Nelson, Director of Place for Norwich City Council. It also outlines the key issues for navigation to be taken forward in Stage 2 and seeks members' views.

Broads Plan context

Aspiration 4 – Maintain a safe, open navigation

Aspiration 5 – enhancement of the Broads landscape character and distinctive built

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The former Deal Ground and Utilities sites, downstream of Trowse Rail Bridge, and the adjacent Carrow Works site represent a major redevelopment opportunity in East Norwich. Members will be aware that a masterplan for the area is being developed by a consultant team on behalf the East Norwich Partnership. This is a partnership of stakeholders including Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council, the Broads

Authority, Homes England, Network Rail and the landowners of the Deal, Utilities and Carrow Works sites.

- 1.2. This report will outline the work completed to date and explain the next stages.

2. Stage 1 of the Master Plan

- 2.1. The masterplanning process began in March 2021 and seeks to plan for the delivery of 4,000 new homes and create 6,000 new jobs. The East Norwich area is the subject of a specific policy in the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP), which allocates it for a residential led mixed-use development on this scale.
- 2.2. The masterplanning process has been informed by a robust and comprehensive evidence base which has fed into the development of concept masterplan options and ultimately into the preferred option stage 1 masterplan. This included desktop and site analysis of technical information and an extensive process of stakeholder engagement. The sites are subject to very significant constraints including flood risk, complex underground infrastructure particularly on the Utilities site, the adjacent mainline railway line and associated activities, and access to the sites which is most constrained on the Deal Ground and Utilities sites. There are also significant heritage assets predominantly on the Carrow Works site and these will affect development opportunities. There is also a County Wildlife Site on the Deal Ground and, of course, there is a statutory right of navigation on the river. All of these factors have affected the development potential in terms of what could be constructed and where.
- 2.3. The Stage 1 plan is the high-level masterplan based on a preferred option which has been developed taking account of all the above factors and which shows the potential locations for development. It proposes the creation of four neighbourhood areas across the sites comprising:
 - a mixed-use quarter at Carrow Works with leisure and retail premises;
 - housing, community and open space at The Villages on the former Deal Ground;
 - an extension to the Wensum waterfront with riverside activities at Waterside East, on the north bank of the river downstream of Carrow Bridge; and
 - a mixed-use area with a marina and housing at Waterside North on the north bank of the river downstream of Trowse rail bridge.
- 2.4. The sites would be linked by bridges over the Wensum and indicative locations are shown. The strategic infrastructure needs, as well as other abnormal costs and the impact of these on the deliverability and viability of the scheme, are also included in the masterplan. It has been the subject of two rounds of consultation and was agreed by Norwich City Council's Cabinet in November 2021. Norwich City Council set up the East Norwich Partnership in early 2020 and has a lead role in the Partnership and development of the masterplan as the majority of the site (and growth) is in its area. It has also made a significant financial contribution from the Towns Fund and has recently

acquired Carrow House. The Partnership has secured funding to date of £675,000 from partners including Homes England.

- 2.5. The Stage 1 masterplan is available to view online [East Norwich Masterplan stage 2: The emerging masterplan | Norwich City Council](#).
- 2.6. Members will receive a briefing on this from Graham Nelson, Director of Place for Norwich City Council.
- 2.7. Further information on the development can be found on Norwich City Council's website: [East Norwich Masterplan | Norwich City Council](#).

3. Stage 2 of the Master Plan

- 3.1. The next stage of the process is the Stage 2 plan, which will build on the Stage 1 preferred option masterplan. Outputs will include an Infrastructure Delivery Plan and refined Strategic Viability Assessment of the preferred option masterplan, informing a refined version of the masterplan which will form the basis of a draft supplementary planning document (SPD) for East Norwich. Stage 2 is proposed to be completed by Spring 2022.
- 3.2. As part of the development of Stage 2, the Broads Authority will need to make detailed comments on the proposals, including the opportunities for and impacts on navigation. It is essential that these are included at an early stage in order to inform the development of wider proposals.
- 3.3. The two key issues for the Broads Authority will be the bridges (because of their impact on the use of the river) and the marina. These issues are linked. The provision of moorings will also be an important consideration and this is also linked to the bridges and marina.

Bridges

- 3.4. Considering first the matter of the bridges, the Authority's position has always been that the historic right of navigation into the Port of Norwich must be protected. The three bridges constructed in recent years downstream of Foundry Bridge, which are the two pedestrian bridges (the Novi Sad/Friendship Bridge and the Lady Julian Bridge) and the Trowse Rail Bridge have all been required to be of an opening construction.
- 3.5. The railway bridge is the subject of specific legislation (1985 Trowse Bridge Act) and Section 25 (4) of the Act requires that it opens on request for the passage of vessels. Members will be aware that in practice this has not always been achieved, but the principle remains extant.
- 3.6. The masterplan does not provide any details of the construction or opening arrangements of any of the bridges, and this would be a matter for the developers in due course, however it is noted that the construction costs will have implications for viability, with higher costs having a greater impact. Realistically, it is likely that there

will be pressure from developers for the bridge(s) to be fixed, principally for reasons of cost.

Marina

- 3.7. Considering then the marina. Whilst the continued protection of the historic right of navigation is accepted, it is the case that river traffic into Norwich has declined very significantly over the last 30 years and there is now negligible commercial traffic, although there is a steady level of leisure use. It has previously been discussed whether a fixed bridge might be considered acceptable if alternative provision were to be made for navigators, and, if that principle were accepted, what such provision might look like, with a marina downstream of the first fixed bridge suggested as an option.
- 3.8. The Stage 1 masterplan indicates that a marina could be located on part of the Utilities site, downstream of Trowse railway bridge and opposite the confluence of the rivers Yare and Wensum at Trowse Eye. The marina shown measures approximately 130m deep and 35m wide. No information has been provided in respect of capacity, depth, ancillary areas or management and it appears from the plan that there is an access across the entrance, possibly in the form of a footpath. It is located on the edge of the East Norwich site, with proposed mixed-use development including housing and open space around it.
- 3.9. It is important to remember that the masterplan is indicative only and does not represent any firm proposals for development, showing instead what would be possible within the constraints, however it is useful to look at what has been drafted so that comments can be made which will be fed into the Stage 2 process. In preparing these comments, officers have discussed the indicative plan, the marina and its role in the masterplan with a consultant specialising in marina design.
- 3.10. In terms of location, there would be benefits from being located on the edge of the larger redevelopment site as there would be clearer access into the marina (away from vessels moored along the riverbank, discussed later), better security in a less public location, less potential for conflict with other users around, for example, noise and amenity and it would create an attractive gateway to both Norwich and the Broads. There are other marinas and public moorings within easy cruising distance (for example Bramerton Common at 1.5 hours, Brundall boatyards and village at 2 hours and Reedham village at 4 hours) and these links to other facilities would make it an attractive location both for a private mooring and for the visiting boater. Good access to the wider development and the city would be essential to make the most of these opportunities, particularly for the visitor. Visitor moorings here would offer an alternative to Norwich Yacht Station, and whilst this would inevitably displace some of that use, it would also attract other users who may be reluctant to navigate through and moor in the city centre.
- 3.11. Looking at the benefits for the East Norwich scheme, a marina on the eastern fringe would physically extend the interest and vitality of the development along the river, as well as increasing the diversity of uses. It would have the potential to add to the

scheme's attractiveness and reinforce its identity as a destination in its own right, which would in turn increase land values and improve viability.

- 3.12. As indicated, the marina would provide around 50 moorings and these would be best achieved off floating rather than fixed pontoons. Adopted Policy DM33 of the Local Plan for the Broads would require that 15% of these be provided as visitor moorings, which would mean 8 berths. However, if, as set out at 3.5 above, the marina was being offered as 'compensation' for the loss of access into the Port of Norwich it would be necessary to consider whether 8 was sufficient. This would need to be the subject of negotiation, but it should be noted that there are other opportunities for mooring within the scope of the masterplan, and this is discussed below. The point that needs to be made here is that the marina should offer both permanent and visitor moorings.
- 3.13. The indicative plan shows some sort of barrier over the entrance to the marina – possibly to carry a riverside footpath. There is no practical need for a lock or tide barrier here and free passage would be required. A draft of 1.5 – 2.0m at MLW would need to be maintained to accommodate the typical Broads boat, and this would involve regular dredging. The excavation spoil could be easily reused on site as ground works will be extensive.
- 3.14. The range and quality of land-based facilities would be important in creating an attractive operation, and a ratio of 1/3 water space to 2/3 land space is optimal. This would provide for 30 car parking spaces, turning and manoeuvring space for vehicles and trailers, hard standing for winter storage and open space and landscaping. A facilities building would be required and this should incorporate office space for the site operator, toilets for marina users (three each for male and female, plus one for disabled access), a shower block and a small laundry. Boatyard facilities such as workshop, pump out, crane and fuel would be very useful, but these are available locally so this would be a matter for the operator. Additional facilities such as a chandlery and café would also be welcome, as these would provide for berth holders and also attract visitors and new customers.
- 3.15. A marina could be operated by either a commercial operator, or, potentially, the Broads Authority. The indicated size is smaller than many commercial marinas, which usually have 100+ berths, but the presence of other moorings and marinas, plus the strength of the Broads boating holiday market and the proximity to Norwich would make this an attractive proposition for an operator. It has the potential to meet demand from a wider area to access the Broads boating market and create a facility with regional importance.

Moorings

- 3.16. In addition to the moorings that could be provided in a marina, there is potential for on-line moorings along the riverbank for part or all of the development. The length of the riverbank is approximately 600m on the north bank and approximately 700m on the south bank and whilst realistically it is unlikely that the entire length would be available

and/or suitable for a mooring (for example the area beside and under bridges), it offers nonetheless a useful opportunity to increase mooring provision.

- 3.17. There would be a number of issues to resolve around riverside moorings, including ownership and future maintenance liabilities, and this would influence how they were used (i.e. private or visitor) which would in turn affect management. There would be advantages in having visitor moorings on the riverbank, both for ease of mooring and to enable access to the leisure and retail facilities in the development, and potentially these could be managed in conjunction with the marina. The riverbed here is owned by Norwich City Council.
- 3.18. The masterplan indicates the possibility of a small basin downstream of Trowse railway bridge, intended primarily to increase flood plain capacity in this part of the site. This could potentially also be used for mooring, or as a base for dayboats and other craft, which would improve access to the water for the casual user and visitor and increase the attractiveness of the development.
- 3.19. The masterplan does not show provision for new slipways or other means of improving access to the water, but this level of detail will be picked up at Stage 2.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1. The Stage 2 process developing the concept in the Stage 1 masterplan is anticipated to run from November 2021 to March 2022. It will provide:
 - An infrastructure delivery plan and refined Strategic viability assessment;
 - A refined masterplan;
 - An evidence base to support planning applications and the allocation in the Greater Norwich Local Plan, and
 - A draft supplementary planning document (SPD) for East Norwich which will be taken forward as part of the GNLP.
- 4.2. One of the key issues at Stage 2 will be to look in greater detail at the timing of costs and receipts and to develop appropriate strategies for securing upfront investment and capturing long term value to repay that investment. This is the point at which the issue of the marina will arise and whether it can be agreed to represent appropriate compensation for the sterilisation of the Port of Norwich by the construction of a fixed bridge(s). If the principle is accepted, then the marina becomes part of the necessary infrastructure to unlock the wider development.
- 4.3. There will be further engagement on the draft SPD which will be subject to public consultation, expected in spring 2022.
- 4.4. For information the original masterplan brief includes a reference to a Stage 3, which is focused on the preparation of a detailed business case to unlock enabling funding to ensure the successful delivery of the overall scheme. Stage 3 falls outside the contract

with the consultant team, but the Stage 2 work described above will feed into this further anticipated stage of work.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The Stage 1 masterplan for East Norwich outlines the potential for a significant scale of development adjacent to the Broads. The key issues for the Authority will be the bridges and the marina shown on the indicative plan.
- 5.2. The views of the Navigation Committee are requested.

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[Broads Plan](#) strategic actions: 4.1, 5.1, 5.3

Appendix 1 – [East Norwich Masterplan stage 2: The emerging masterplan | Norwich City Council](#)