

# TOGETHER, FOR OUR FUTURE



---

## FURTHER AFIELD SUMMARY



---

## Foreword

We are the fifth largest shire county in England, with a population of nearly 900,000; forecast to grow to more than a million by 2036. Alongside our growing population, we have a buoyant job market and high levels of employment. We're one of the largest county economies with more than 37,000 businesses, 348,000 jobs worth £18 billion – and a net contributor to the UK economy.

Growing populations and economies mean our County's city, towns and villages are increasing in size to create new communities for the future. There are plans to build more than 80,000 homes over the next 20 years, and Norfolk is fortunate to have enough space to accommodate both new housing and commercial growth.

We are all proud of our unique environment, identity, heritage and assets. And we all share that same ambition to see Norfolk succeed. We see it as our responsibility to create a plan that matches our collective ambition to ensure our communities grow, thrive and prosper for the future. There are challenges ahead, not just for the County Council, but for all of us. More than ever, we need to work better together for the greater good. We need vision and leadership to strive to improve, otherwise we risk falling behind the rest of the country.

Norfolk's success in the future is predicated on our infrastructure needs while protecting our special environment. We need to build an inclusive society, with engaged citizens, so we are ready to be tomorrow's economy.

We need to act today to create a successful county for now and the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Proctor'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'A' and a stylized 'P'.

**Andrew Proctor**  
**Executive Leader of Norfolk County Council**





---

## Preface

Norfolk's economy today is extremely diverse ranging from tourism, modern agriculture, research as well as host to the largest offshore wind turbine array in the world.

To understand what we collectively need to do to sustain a successful County for the future we have carried out an extensive review of the trends and drivers that might impact upon Norfolk over the next 20 years. We undertook this work using well tested foresight approaches, best evidence and engagement with experts such as the Royal Society of Arts, Aviva and the UK Government Foresight teams.

Our County has experienced a great deal of change and our work, highlighted in this report, shows that ever more radical change is coming. The way our economy functions will change. A rapidly ageing population, technologies that bridge the rural productivity gap, a more varied climate with hotter summers and wetter winters will all require careful planning. We must embrace these changes to ensure Norfolk is a place of success, for all of us.

These changes will be as profound as drainage ditches, tractors, or mobile phones were to our forebears. This work affirms that we need to be ever more strategic, work together to common goals and act now for future generations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona McDiarmid". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Fiona McDiarmid**  
**Executive Director Strategy & Governance**



---

# Further Afield - Summary

## OUR STATEMENT OF INTENT

Norfolk is a brilliant place to live and work. There is a beautiful coast and countryside, a wealth of history, vibrant communities and culture and cutting-edge research and industries.

We all want to create a sustainable, prosperous future, with a more inclusive economy that creates opportunities for all.

The future brings challenges as well as opportunities. Issues like an ageing population, climate change and increased automation mean that we cannot afford to stand still. By looking ahead and understanding these issues, we can work collaboratively on a bold and collective response.

This report shows us some key areas to work on. We will agree some early actions at our summit and pledge to work together, for our future.

To embed the findings of this work into Norfolk County Council working practice and strategy development, we have looked at work that is already happening under each theme, and where we could potentially boost this further this to future proof council services.

## 01 ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Climate change and poor infrastructure are key risks to sustaining and growing the Norfolk economy over the next 20 years.

In April 2019, Norfolk County Council passed a motion recognising the serious impact around climate change and environmental degradation, and the need for urgent action. The Council committed to respond to the challenges presented in DEFRA's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to improve the Environment', in addition to the responding the emerging views on global warming presented by the United Nations.

This resulted in the formal adoption of a new Environmental Policy at Full Council in November 2019, which committed the Council to achieving net zero carbon emissions on its estates by 2030 and working towards 'carbon neutrality' across the county by the same date.

Opportunities exist for greater partnership working to address climate change, within the local authority family and the wider public sector. This could build on existing structures such as the Norfolk Resilience Forum and Norfolk Waste Partnership. The Economic Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk provides a whole-County view of required infrastructure. Future iterations of the strategy need to ensure it is aligned to future needs.

## WHAT WE NEED TO DO, TOGETHER...

We need to pursue a County wide approach to our environmental resilience and agree a combined position for infrastructure investment. If, done in isolation, this will lead to poor outcomes for the most vulnerable members of our society.



---

## 02 FUTURE OF SOCIETY

In Norfolk, key risks affecting societal cohesion in the future are: changing demographics, the rural/urban divide and inequality of opportunities for its residents. To mitigate for this, the Council is aiming to put social inclusion at the heart of everything it does.

Norfolk County Council's 6 year-business plan, Together, for Norfolk, and the local authority coalition on inclusive growth focuses on opening up opportunity for all.

Together, for Norfolk, sets out a clear ambition; for our County to be a place where we all have the chance to contribute to and benefit from economic growth and regeneration and where any of us can access the education we want, develop the skills we need and gain the employment we seek.

The focus on Inclusive Growth brings together our wish to strengthen and grow the economy, taking into account not only economic prosperity, but also a wider set of objectives that benefit society as a whole – such as health and wellbeing, inclusion and equality, environmental resilience and affordable and connected places.

By working closely together with the Chief Executives and Leaders of all of Norfolk's Councils, and other key partners, we will ensure a more joined up agenda across councils, communities, employers and professions with a shared vision to improve social mobility.

Emerging Inclusive Growth themes and priorities have included improving educational attainment, employment opportunities and career pathways, adult skills, widening participation in higher education, affordable housing, social value procurement, and connectivity. Norfolk's prioritisation of inclusive growth and the

collaborative approach to address the issues, puts it in the vanguard of shire counties, as most work is currently being conducted in metropolitan areas.

We also need to engage more proactively with other areas with similar challenges. This will strengthen our voice in central government through mechanisms such as the fair funding review and through organisations like the Local Government Association, the County Council Network and the Rural Services Network.

### WHAT WE NEED TO DO, TOGETHER...

Collectively, we need to act on the most pressing challenges and aim to **increase the life chances of our residents** so that all may enjoy equality of opportunity.

We need to create a **new 'rural deal'**, or large parts of the County may become unproductive and unliveable except to the richest in our society.

## 03 JOBS, INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY

The County needs a joint effort on how to respond to future technology and how our residents and workforces upskill to meet the future need. Norfolk County Council's Information Management Team is leading the development of a 10-year technology roadmap for the Council. We face big challenges and potential opportunities from advances in technology, such as increased automation and digitisation of services, the rise of artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things (IoT). A technology roadmap offers Norfolk a chance to embrace the opportunities that digital, data and technology bring and will act as an enabler to doing things differently, delivering more efficient services and improving outcomes for citizens.



---

A technology roadmap is a document that outlines how an organisation plans to reach short-term and long-term goals through technological solutions. It maps out the technology that an organisation currently has and what technology they will need in the future. A technology roadmap will help Norfolk County Council understand how technology will support its corporate strategy. It will document the strategic direction we wish to take and coherently describe the technology required to deliver our services. It will allow us to align better with our strategic partners, to the benefit of Norfolk citizens. And, finally, it allows us to be prepared for the speed at which the emerging technology landscape changes by continually refreshing and reviewing the roadmap, in collaboration with our strategic partners.

#### **WHAT WE NEED TO DO, TOGETHER...**

**Investment in technology** such as IoT, autonomous vehicles and ubiquitous high speed broadband will enable people to live in our villages and towns but still contribute to the emerging economies, and encourage our young people to stay.

**Investment in our workforce** will mean people have the right skills for emerging jobs. Technology can automate repetitive and dangerous jobs and boost productivity, but learning new skills is key if people are to adapt. The education sector will need to work closely with business to provide the skills of the future.

#### **04 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT**

Norfolk County Council needs to continue to invest in community cohesion and empowerment to ensure that the fabric of communities is strengthened, reducing demand for council services. Building on existing work the Council has set up a capital fund to invest in social infrastructure and will be inviting applications from the voluntary sector.

In addition, Norfolk County Council is developing a Prevention and a Communities Strategy. Both will set out innovations as to how to strengthen and empower communities to help keep older people at home for longer, enjoying a greater quality of life.

Lastly, Norfolk County Council is co-investing with partners in developing a single information, advice and guidance service to ensure that people find community activities easy to find and access.

Norfolk County Council will examine the best way to work with, engage and consult the people of Norfolk.

#### **WHAT WE NEED TO DO, TOGETHER...**

With increasing interest in local decision making by residents, there are actions we can take together to empower communities, and actions local communities can take to empower themselves.





### **NEXT STEPS**

Norfolk County Council is convening a summit in 2020 to take this work forward. The summit - which will bring together public sector leaders, the voluntary sector and businesses- will help us to drive forward systemic working to prepare Norfolk for the future.

All stakeholders of Norfolk need to understand and plan for the changes we might expect to see over the next 20 years. It is also our collective responsibility to work together where we need to, to improve things for the benefit of our residents.

This summary sets out what Norfolk County Council is doing to respond to the anticipated changes. We have provided further tools to help you respond to change at the web address below.

---

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/together](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/together)

Published February 2020

**TOGETHER,  
FOR OUR FUTURE**



**Norfolk** County Council

