

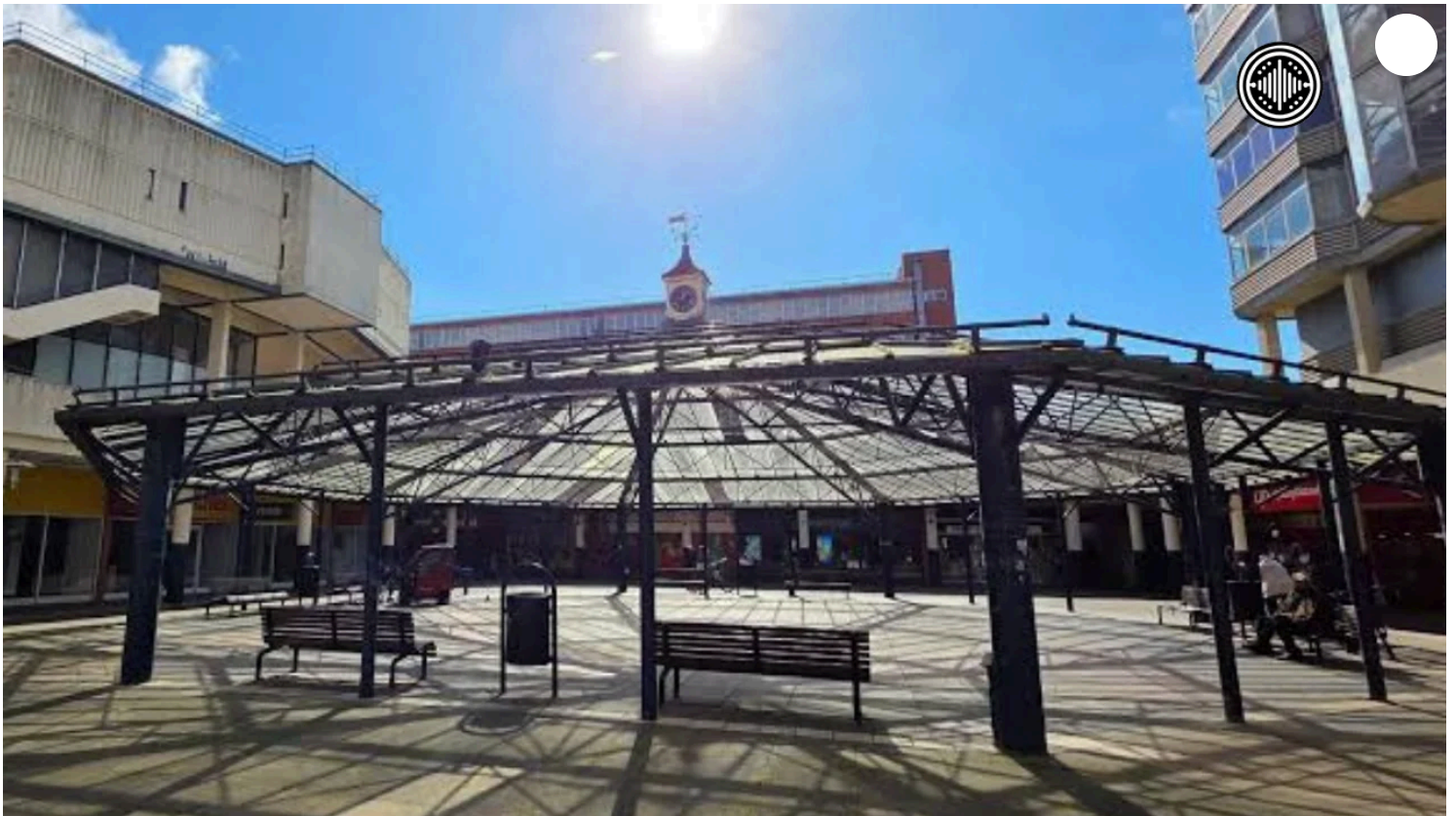
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£350m Anglia Square Redevelopment Hailed as a Landmark Deal

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A £350 million agreement between insurance giant Aviva and Norwich City Council has been described by council leaders as a “groundbreaking” step in redeveloping Anglia Square, despite fresh concerns over transparency and past financial failings.

The Labour-led authority has partnered with Aviva, which has operated in Norwich since the 18th century, to unlock investment for the construction of around 1,100 homes on the long-

neglected city centre site. The redevelopment is partly funded by a £34 million government grant covering the acquisition and clearance of the land.

Council leader Mike Stonard was quick to herald the scheme as transformative. “I believe our partnership with Aviva will come to be seen as a historical partnership in one of England’s most historic cities,” he said.

However, scepticism remains after the collapse of Lion Homes, the council’s former housebuilding arm, which went into liquidation after racking up losses exceeding £5 million.

In a recent interview, Alex Catt, leader of the council’s Green group, expressed reservations about oversight and accountability. “If they can’t learn from the mistakes around the problems they had with Lion Homes and the money they’ve lost there, it’s going to be so hard to gain confidence in a scheme like this,” he warned.

Mark Bousley of Aviva said the insurer was committed to setting a higher standard. “There’s been uncertainty around Anglia Square for a long time. What we’ve tried to do is painstaking work with the city council, with Homes England, and within our team to understand the best possible way forward for this project,” he explained.

Although Aviva has declined to disclose the exact amount it plans to invest, the company confirmed it would contribute significant funding and would seek additional backing from housing associations and developers. The homes are promised to be built “to the highest quality we can achieve,” according to Bousley.

The council has stated that at least half the units are intended to be “affordable”, with 350 earmarked for the initial phases of construction. Of these, a minimum of 90 properties are expected to be made available as social housing for residents on the council’s waiting list, though Stonard insisted the authority would aim for a higher total.

Despite Labour’s assurances of improved governance, questions linger over whether adequate scrutiny will be applied this time around. Stonard maintained that tighter controls are in place. “Those investors will do their due diligence, we’ll do our due diligence, so we’ll have a good prospect of ensuring those schemes can be viable and can continue,” he asserted.

The demolition of existing structures at Anglia Square is scheduled to be completed by March 2026, with construction expected to follow shortly thereafter.

