



# Norfolk County Council

## Your Views On A County Deal For Norfolk

### Overview

Norfolk County Council and the Government have agreed, in principle, a new County Deal, to transfer funding and powers to Norfolk – a process known as devolution. This provides a unique and exciting opportunity to unlock significant funding and for decisions currently made in Whitehall to be made in Norfolk, for Norfolk.

Under a County Deal, Norfolk would benefit from a new Government investment fund including £20m per year over the next 30 years, and an additional £12.9m during the current Spending Review period (2024-25). In addition to the investment fund, Norfolk would also get control of the Adult Education Budget (just over £10m in 2022/23) and an un-ringfenced Transport and Maintenance Budget (approximately £40m per year). There would also be a county council leader, directly elected by the public and with no additional bureaucracy or changes to councils.

This Deal represents a real opportunity to unlock Norfolk's potential, for the county take control of its own destiny and shape its own future, and to have a stronger voice nationally. If our Deal went ahead, we would have powers and finance to invest in areas such as better transport, skills, job opportunities, housing, and regeneration.

This could be just the start of further powers being devolved to Norfolk. Some examples of additional powers and responsibilities devolved in other areas of the country include greater powers over the NHS and social care and controls over the number of holiday homes in coastal areas. Therefore, it is important to hear your views about this Deal and your ideas about priorities for Norfolk.

## Why we are consulting

Norfolk County Council was invited to begin devolution negotiations for a County Deal in February 2022 and is one of the first few authorities in the country to start this process. So far, County Deals have been agreed, in principle, in North Yorkshire and York, Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, Cornwall and Suffolk.

This consultation is a chance for you to find out more about our County Deal and give us your feedback. For devolution to go ahead we need to hear your views.

As well as this survey, which guides you through our Deal and asks a set of questions, there is a leaflet, frequently asked questions document and video which provide you with more information about our Deal.

We are consulting through:

- This online consultation, which is also available as a paper copy
- Drop in events throughout Norfolk
- Business events across the county
- Third sector events
- Our Norfolk Residents' Panel
- Local councils

We are consulting for six weeks from **6 February to 20 March 2023**. Please note that if we receive any consultation responses after **20 March**, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to take them into account.

We will feed back the findings from our consultation to our County Councillors and Government for their consideration so that a decision will be made about next steps for our County Deal.

**If you need a copy of this consultation document in a different format, please email [haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk), call 0344 800 8020 or Text Relay on 18001 0344 800 8020 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.**

The consultation should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

You can also attend one of our drop-in events where you can speak to one of our officers, find out more and complete paper copy of this survey if you so wish.

## **Personal information, confidentiality, and data protection**

We will use any personal information to understand how different groups of people feel about our County Deal.

We will process any personal information we receive from you in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679), the Data Protection Act 2018 and Norfolk County Council's data protection policy and guidelines. This means that Norfolk County Council will hold your personal data and only use it for the purpose for which it was collected, being this consultation. You can find a copy of our privacy statement at <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/privacy>

We won't identify individuals when reporting back our findings and under our record management policy we will keep this information for five years. We will also, under normal circumstances, not pass your personal data on to anyone else. However, we may be asked under access to information laws to publish or disclose some, or all, of the information you provide in response to this consultation. We will only do this where such disclosure will comply with such relevant information laws which include the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

This consultation is being independently analysed by The Consultation Institute. Selected staff members from the Consultation Institute will have access to the responses for purposes of analysis only but all information will remain with Norfolk County Council.

You can choose not to take part in the consultation, to stop responding at any time, or to ignore any personal questions that you do not want to answer.

By completing and returning this form you agree that you have read the personal information, confidentiality and data protection statement above.

## A County Deal for Norfolk

The Government and Norfolk County Council are proposing to work together on a devolution deal to allow Norfolk to unlock long-term funding and gain greater freedom to decide how best to meet local needs and create opportunities for the people who live and work in the county. Put simply, this means some decisions and funding previously controlled in Westminster could, in the future, be decided by Norfolk.

Agreeing a county deal for Norfolk will mean that, from 2024 onwards, we could:

- **Target funding and resources to Norfolk's own priorities** with a new investment fund of £20m per year for 30 years
- **Give Norfolk a stronger business voice**, by providing more direct business input into decision making and strategic economic planning.
- **Invest in the skills we know we need** with devolution of the adult education budget and input into the new Local Skills Improvement Plans.
- **Open-up housing and employment sites** with an initial injection of £12.9m capital funding and new powers to drive regeneration, housing, and development priorities
- **Invest in local transport planning and consolidate transport budgets** to better direct funding to meet our local needs and priorities.
- **Have a Council Leader who is directly elected by the public**, with the first election planned for May 2024.
- **Benefit from devolution as it would enable Norfolk's voice to be heard by Government** to help shape future policies.

You can read the full deal on the Government website

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/norfolk-devolution-deal](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/norfolk-devolution-deal)

If you would like a hard copy of the devolution deal, contact Norfolk County Council. Details of how to contact us can be found at the end of the document.

The following is a series of survey questions about a County Deal for Norfolk and information is presented before each question with links to the relevant section of the Government deal to help you make an informed response. There are consultation questions followed by some quick questions to find out more about who is responding to our survey. Thank you for giving us your views on Norfolk's future.

## **Target funding and resources to Norfolk's own priorities**

Norfolk County Council will use and control the new Norfolk Investment Fund of £20m per year for 30 years. As with all devolution deals, Norfolk will need to demonstrate to the Government that money is being invested in the right way and creating a positive impact for our region. The Government will review and check every five years to ensure that residents and businesses in Norfolk can see what is being achieved.

Other funding elements in the deal relate to Government's current Spending Review period (which runs to the financial year 2024/2025). The next Spending Review will take place in Autumn 2024, to come into effect in 2025/26.

We continue to engage district authorities and other partners, such as business, education, and the voluntary sector on the delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund through a group of representatives that would be the Norfolk Investment Framework steering group. Representatives include portfolio holders for each district authority and Town Deal Board Chairs.

Other areas with devolution deals have seen significant funding in subsequent spending rounds directly channelled to them, for example Tees Valley, who secured a further £900m of Government investment in the 5 years since their original deal.

We have compared the 30-year £600m Norfolk Investment Fund, which is the key element of our proposed County Deal, with the amount provided by the Government in other deals. Our analysis shows that the Norfolk Investment Fund is worth £21.83 per head per year; this is in line with the existing devolution deals, which have an average of £20.64 per head per year. You can find full details of the proposed funding in the Finance and Investment section of the Norfolk Devolution Deal.<sup>1</sup>

**1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal for Norfolk to have control of money devolved from the Government?**

Please choose one answer only, from the list below:

- |                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Strongly agree            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Agree                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Neither agree or disagree | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Disagree                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Strongly disagree         | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Don't know                | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

**Why do you say that?**

It is critical that we achieve the best deal for Norfolk – enabling better outcomes for our residents and businesses. We completely agree with the principle that Norfolk should have more control of money devolved from Government – **we also believe that Norfolk should have maximum devolution** based on the below factors:

- Be the biggest deal with the most powers
- Involve and engage all the principal authorities
- Build on the tried and tested model for devolution

The Deal set out for consultation, is the only deal available for Norfolk.

We do not support the proposal that Norfolk County Council will ‘use and control the new Norfolk Investment Fund’ through a new governance model of a directly elected leader and cabinet, which only allows for one of the eight principal authorities in Norfolk to make critical decisions. Our preference would be for a model which has similar principles to a Mayoral Combined Authority which would allow for all councils in Norfolk to work together collaboratively to deliver the devolved powers and functions.

A large proportion of the deal and what the investment fund would be spent on, is set around growth, housing and planning as an enabler for levelling up. However, successful delivery of these levers are reliant on the functions, powers and capacity of the city, borough and district councils in Norfolk. Though mentioned that districts would be ‘engaged’ with, it is clear from

other areas of the Country where devolution has been incredibly successful, that all key principal authorities in the area (whom have the functions and power to deliver), have an equal and constituent role to play, with the ability to have a vote upon where and how the devolved funding and powers are used.

Tees Valley Devolution Deal, mentioned by the County Council in the consultation itself as a comparison of what a successful deal looks like, worked across all four of the constituent councils in the area to develop a Mayoral Combined Authority. As the County Council had said, Tees Valley has managed to bring in a further £900m of Government investment in the 5 years since their original deal. A key difference between the Tees Valley Deal and the proposed Deal for Norfolk is Tees Valley had the ability to bring all partners around the table, utilising the capacity and capabilities of all councils, to make critical decisions and see these through to delivery. This Deal does not do that and will struggle to deliver the powers and investment fund successfully without the buy in and partnership of all councils.

The current deal for Norfolk could seek to be more ambitious and the funding amount of £20m per year could be more. The West of England Deal (which was agreed in 2016) equated to £27 per head per annum (£30m per year) – plus inflation 2016-2022. In order to reach the same per head figure and relative value, the Norfolk Deal would have to be worth more than £30m – this does not take into account the inflationary impact of this financial year.

We also need a deal which provides us with the greatest ability to leverage investment. A model similar to a Mayoral Combined Authority would allow for all partners together to lever borrowing potential through bespoke development corporations for example. County alone, has the consideration of their own budget challenges (with Adults and Social Care) which would impact on their ability to lever significant funding to support delivery of Levelling Up.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/norfolk-devolution-deal/norfolk-devolution-deal#finance-and-investment>

## How to give Norfolk a stronger business voice

The New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is a non-statutory body which works with businesses, education, and local authority partners to drive growth and enterprise across both Norfolk and Suffolk. The LEP secures public and private investment to deliver initiatives to improve infrastructure, skills, and business support.

Under our proposed a County Deal for Norfolk, and in line with Government's objective to have more local accountability, LEP functions will be brought into Norfolk County Council (NCC) to create a local business voice. Benefits of bringing functions into NCC include:

- Dedicated Business Board for Norfolk alone (currently the Business Board serves both Suffolk and Norfolk)
- Economic programmes that are specific to Norfolk
- Co-ordination between businesses and the skills they need, as training will be commissioned from within the same organisation.

This is an exciting opportunity for Norfolk to have a stronger business voice and be instrumental in shaping our economic growth, plus create and secure jobs for future generations. Norfolk County Council will be supported by the Government to take on all the important functions and roles set out in Section 10 of the guidance on LEP integration published in March 2022. More information on the Government's approach can be read in the LEP Integration section of the Norfolk Devolution Deal.<sup>2</sup> Along with the guidance published in March 2022.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/norfolk-devolution-deal/norfolk-devolution-deal#:~:text=does%20not%20hold.-,LEP%20integration,-35.%20The%20Levelling>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-enterprise-partnerships-integration-guidance>



**2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed change to create a stronger local business voice for Norfolk**

Please choose one answer only, from the list below:

- |                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Strongly agree            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Agree                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Neither agree or disagree | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Disagree                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Strongly disagree         | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Don't know                | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

**Why do you say that?**

We do not disagree that Norfolk should have a stronger local business voice. It is critical that we are able to embed a more collaborative model to growth to drive investment for our businesses. However, we do have concerns with the proposal that the LEP should be integrated into Norfolk County Council as a single institution.

The LEP has historically had a strong role to play in the growth of Norfolk across our key sectors and the reason the LEP has been successful, is because of the collaborative and integrated way of working across all partners. Districts have the key levers of economic growth, housing and planning – all of which are the key elements which drive growth. We believe that bringing the functions of the LEP into a model similar to a Mayoral Combined Authority, would avoid the ‘stop start’ challenges we have had with growth in Norfolk and enable it to become a successful delivery vehicle for growth across the County. As mentioned in other parts of our consultation response, a model similar to a Mayoral Combined Authority, through the new devolved powers, provides a clear focus on delivering Levelling Up, without the conflict of interest of also needing to deliver statutory services of the County which are equally just as important.

Alongside this, it has not been made clear in the Deal or consultation on what happens with any assets in the LEP which are owned by districts which would need to be considered alongside the contracts for each asset.

## Invest in the skills we know we need

Under a Deal for Norfolk, we will have both the money to spend on adult education and the opportunity to decide locally what it is spent on. We will have the opportunity to contribute to Local Skills Improvement Plans, developed by the Chamber of Commerce, enabling us to invest in the skills we and businesses know we need for the future.

This devolution deal gives us powers to help local people and businesses in Norfolk get the skills and support to reach their ambitions. Funding will be set aside for skills required when entering employment through apprenticeships, training courses or further learning leading to qualifications.

Boosting adult skills could add significant value to our region, and our County Deal includes fully devolving the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to Norfolk County Council from academic year 2025/26. You can find full details of Adult Education plans in the Adult Education section of the Norfolk Devolution Deal.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to move the Adult Education Budget from Government to Norfolk County Council?

Please choose one answer only, from the list below:

- |                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Strongly agree            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Agree                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Neither agree or disagree | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Disagree                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Strongly disagree         | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Don't know                | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/norfolk-devolution-deal/norfolk-devolution-deal#:~:text=market%20and%20skills-,Adult%20education,-41.%20Norfolk%20faces>

### **Why do you say that?**

We do agree that devolution of the Adult Education Budget is the right thing to do. Alongside this, we also believe there are further opportunities which need to be explored in a devolution deal to ensure as a County, we are able to invest in the skills we need for the future. To enable effective delivery of the devolved budget, it is key to ensure there are strong links with skills plans within the area to facilitate growth. We would argue that a more ambitious deal would seek to secure a skills deal, allowing for greater devolution of skills powers and funding and a leading role in the design of Local Skills Plans based on the local labour market and economic needs.

We do not agree that the Adult Education Budget should be moved to Norfolk County Council. A collaboration of partners of principal authorities, could take on a more active role as economic champions – a key way of doing this is empowering through consolidating funding and powers around skills plans development.

### **Open-up housing and employment sites**

One of the top priorities for Norfolk is to increase the availability of decent affordable housing for local people and enable them to continue to live in their communities.

Our County Deal proposes almost £7m in 2024/25 for the building of new homes on brownfield land - sites which have been previously developed.

This is a good opportunity to help residents and their children who are passionate about living in Norfolk by building new homes and driving regeneration. This will involve:

- Working with District Councils and other relevant partners to identify local priorities and using newly given Homes England Compulsory purchase powers to acquire land for development, regeneration, and infrastructure projects in the public interest, which will help to bring about improvements to social, economic and environmental wellbeing.
- Ability to establish Development Corporations (with the consent of the local planning authority) which are statutory bodies created to support the regeneration of a defined area and can draw on a wide range of powers to acquire, develop, hold, and dispose of land and property, and develop infrastructure.

Though the Deal is between the Government and Norfolk County Council, implementation of the Deal can only be achieved through working with District Councils, and other partners. You can find full details of the Housing and Land proposal Housing and Land section of the Norfolk Devolution Deal.<sup>5</sup>

**4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with plans to open-up housing and employment sites in Norfolk?**

Please choose one answer only, from the list below:

- |                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Strongly agree            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Agree                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Neither agree or disagree | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Disagree                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Strongly disagree         | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Don't know                | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

**Why do you say that?**

We agree that the Deal goes some way to put in place plans to open-up housing and employment sites in Norfolk. We continue to reiterate however, that we believe there is further to go in the powers and freedoms negotiated as part of this Deal to make a real change and impact in Norfolk. As mentioned in other parts of this response, simply 'working with' and getting the 'consent' of district councils is not enough to ensure delivery of Levelling Up is fully maximized for Norfolk.

There are further opportunities (see below) which could be secured through a devolution Deal to drive growth and housing delivery which are not currently included in this Deal. Particularly, it would be beneficial to seek greater power over infrastructure through powers previously devolved to other Mayoral areas such as:

- Power to create Land Commissions across all principal authorities – reviewing and developing creative approaches to the use of public land
- Ability for Development Corporations to issue development bonds (similar to the model previously seen in Milton Keynes)

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/norfolk-devolution-deal/norfolk-devolution-deal#:~:text=contracted%20employment%20programmes,-Housing%20and%20land,-54.%20Norfolk%20County>

## **Invest in local transport planning and consolidate transport budgets to better direct funding to meet our local needs and priorities**

Norfolk is the fifth largest county (by area) in the country, and it is essential to create an effective transport system that creates certainty for the future while protecting the beauty of our region. Extra funding could start in 2024/25 as the Government will work with Norfolk to agree an integrated multi-year transport settlement at the next Spending Review.

Presently, we receive funding for specific transport initiatives, each with its own terms and conditions set by the Government. In the future and under an integrated approach all those funds will come as one whole pot giving us the flexibility to make decisions in Norfolk about our own transport plans like helping to shape and improve local rail services, deliver high quality bus services along with decarbonising local bus services and improving the road network serving Norfolk. Further funding could be available to help with our ambitious carbon reduction targets.

You can find full details of proposed transport plans in the Transport section of the Norfolk Devolution Deal.<sup>6</sup>

### **5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with proposals for an integrated transport settlement?**

Please choose one answer only, from the list below:

- |                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Strongly agree            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Agree                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Neither agree or disagree | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Disagree                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Strongly disagree         | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Don't know                | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/norfolk-devolution-deal/norfolk-devolution-deal#:~:text=functions%20and%20powers-,Transport%20plans,-66.%20In%20line>

### **Why do you say that?**

We agree with the proposal for an integrated transport settlement for Norfolk, however again reiterate that we believe this would best be delivered through a collaboration of principal authorities rather than through the County Council alone.

## **Have a Council Leader who is directly elected by the public, with the first election planned for May 2024**

Our Deal requires Norfolk County Council to change the way its leader is appointed. Put simply, instead of being appointed by other County Councillor's, every eligible person in Norfolk would get the opportunity to vote for a Leader. The position of a directly elected Leader would replace the existing position of the Leader of the Council with the first election planned for May 2024.

A directly elected leader would be supported day to day by the County Council's Cabinet and existing officers and systems.

Norfolk County Council also wishes to create a Norfolk Leadership Board, consisting of representatives from local government, health, the police, business, education, and the voluntary sector, to further support the directly elected Leader with shaping the priorities for Norfolk and developing strategy for further devolution deals.

A County Deal for Norfolk is not about local government re-organisation, every council remains a sovereign organisation and will not lose any powers or statutory duties. The directly elected leader would not change this, nor would they have the power to do so in the future.

The Deal text gives details of the proposed Governance model in the Governance section of the Norfolk Devolution Deal.<sup>7</sup>

**6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with plans for an elected leader and cabinet system of governance?**

Please choose one answer only, from the list below:

- |                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Strongly agree            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Agree                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Neither agree or disagree | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Disagree                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Strongly disagree         | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Don't know                | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

**Why do you say that?**

We have concerns with the plans for an elected leader and cabinet system of governance which is **untried and untested**, and believe that this governance model will inhibit delivery within Norfolk and block the Levelling Up of our County. Within the Deal, there is a lack of focus on delivering new devolved powers and functions. **We want a model which does not subordinate Norfolk** – Across the country, there are 10 combined authorities already in existence which cover 53 different types of Councils and government have made it clear that it is models like a Mayoral Combined Authority they are keen to move forwards with, having recently cited only Mayoral Combined Authorities in a key speech on the 25 January. Norfolk should not be the test bed for this governance model and should have a model which is proven to work as in other areas. We want a model which does not leave Norfolk behind.

We also have a concern around how focused the DEL can be on delivery of devolved powers and functions, while also having to deal with the ongoing delivery of statutory services of the County Council. A DEL would have the responsibility of the powers and funding devolved from Government, but they will also be vested with all executive powers of the County Council. No other existing Mayor has to simultaneously manage the added responsibilities of growth with the complicated minutia of service delivery. **Is this too much for one person to do?** There is a real risk here of Levelling Up in Norfolk being hampered by the need for the DEL to focus on resolving critical service delivery issues within the County Council. When it comes to priorities, it would be the devolved functions and powers which would drop to allow for the statutory services to be delivered.

The DEL model requires an additional election to take place as the deal has missed the opportunity to integrate the PCC functions into the elected leader role (like in other devolved

areas). Past public data for the cost of PCC elections in Norfolk show that this is in the region of £1m – which could be money saved to the public purse by rolling in functions of the PCC into a single accountable person role.

We believe that the best way of achieving Levelling Up in Norfolk and to deliver Levelling Up through the devolved powers and functions, is to deliver a model similar to an Mayoral Combined Authority across the county, building upon the successful collaborative working across all local authority partners and bringing together critical levers for delivery.

District councils in England deliver 86 out of 137 essential local government services to over 22 million people – 40% of the population – and cover 68% of the area of the country. Achieving levelling up for our communities can only be done with true collaboration of each partner.

A more collaborative model of governance for Norfolk would allow us to utilise the capacity, capabilities and local knowledge of all councils to drive delivery of devolved powers.

Working in collaboration Norfolk could have an important role and voice across the eastern region and wider and be a key partner of central government to drive regional growth and productivity. This builds upon the tried and tested model seen across the country. Currently, this model has not been fully explored and is missed as a potential other option to drive forwards devolution at pace.

There are a range of benefits to a more collaborative model similar to an Mayoral Combined Authority which could be capitalised upon. Central Government have themselves also recognised the advantages of a MCA model, quoting in the most recent Devolution Deal for the North East 'A key advantage of the Mayoral Combined Authority model is its joint governance arrangements for key growth levers such as transport, skills, economic development and regeneration, which allow for strategic prioritisation across its area and integrated policy development'.<sup>1</sup>

### Benefits

- Ability to make decisions that affect the people we represent, closer to those people – through having city, borough and district representatives sit apart of a collaborative partnership
- It formally embeds the already existing Norfolk Public Sector Leaders Board and allows for a greater ability to affect change in Norfolk. This does not add a layer of governance, as it embeds the already existing partnership in Norfolk
- Greater access to resources through collaboration of city, borough, districts and County – leading to co-investment and co-production rather than siloed delivery. This would allow for all partners working together to pool budgets on shared ambitions and shared decision making e.g. business rate pooling
- A directly elected mayor of an MCA or similar model provides the ability to focus on delivery of newly devolved powers and functions, without the complexity of also needing to focus on delivery of statutory services.
- It would set the course for future collaboration and better joined up working

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<sup>1</sup> North East Devolution Deal

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1126764/North\\_East\\_Devolution\\_deal.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1126764/North_East_Devolution_deal.pdf)



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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/norfolk-devolution-deal/norfolk-devolution-deal#:~:text=a%20devolution%20deal-,Governance,-16.%20Strong%20local>

## **Benefitting from devolution and enabling Norfolk’s voice to be heard by Government to help shape future policies**

County Deals are part of the Government’s levelling up agenda designed “to spread opportunity equally across the UK”, bespoke to the needs of the individual places, bringing decisions closer to people and places. The Government is clear that County Deals are not about local government re-organisation and the County Council is committed to working closely with key partners such as district councils, businesses plus other bodies, to make the most of any new powers and funding that come into Norfolk because of a Deal.

Norfolk would benefit by being part of a group of areas with devolution deals and directly elected Leaders or Mayors giving the County better direct access to Government ministers with the ability to lobby on important matters for our area.

The proposed Deal will require a directly elected leader. The most significant element of the deal, the Investment Fund worth £20 million per year over 30 years, as well as other funding and powers, would not be available without a directly elected leader. Details of the devolution framework are available on p.140 of the Levelling Up White Paper.<sup>8</sup>

### **7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the principals of devolution and the benefits it brings to Norfolk?**

Please choose one answer only, from the list below:

- |                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Strongly agree            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Agree                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Neither agree or disagree | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1052706/Levelling\\_Up\\_WP\\_HRES.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1052706/Levelling_Up_WP_HRES.pdf)

- |                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Disagree          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Don't know        | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### Why do you say that?

We agree with the principles of devolution and the benefits it could bring to Norfolk. This deal is a starting point but we believe there is scope for a more ambitious deal for Norfolk which is needed to deal with the challenges and opportunities of the future across our County. There is room for growth in relation to the powers and funding negotiated with Government. The deal is focussed too narrowly on elements of growth and could be seen to miss the wider opportunities around health, justice and the community, which is increasingly important in Norfolk with an increasingly challenged social care system and growing problems with health care.

The Levelling Up White Paper sets out a total of 23 functions which could be negotiated in devolution deals. The Directly Elected Leader model, chosen by the County Council, will only allow for 17 out of the 23 functions to be devolved. 6 of the functions are reserved only for either a Combined Authority or Mayoral Combined Authority.

It is devolution of new freedoms and powers which will drive a more ambitious deal for Norfolk and we believe there are further opportunities which need to be fully explored as part of the Deal such as:

1. A **collaborative governance model** which brings all the principal authorities with all the local government powers together to drive effective delivery for the County.
2. **Funding over a 30 year period** which is sufficient and takes into account inflationary pressures – at least £30m per year. Ability to capitalise on the direction of travel of Government in providing **single department-style settlements** to MCAs.
3. **Full integration of the LEP into a collaborative governance model similar to an MCA** – enabling it to become a successful delivery vehicle, driving growth across the County.
4. A more **holistic and co-design approach to criminal justice**, prevention and rehabilitation through devolution and integration of criminal justice, offender management powers and PCC functions
  - o Ability to reduce governance by rolling in the functions of the PCC within a collaborative Board to focus on strategic public safety issues.
  - o Closely integrate health, education and accommodation, with police, Crown Prosecution Service, the courts, prisons, and probation service – encouraging simpler pathways to support which would improve outcomes and reduce costs.
  - o Opportunity to have a single crime reduction plan.
  - o Potential to roll in fire service under future reviews and alignment.
5. Greater **integration and delivery of health and wellbeing** – taking a person centred approach through enabling partners working collaboratively to have a strategic convening role, bringing together the statutory responsibilities from across the ICS, County and District partners

- A collaborative board could have a strategic convening role, bringing together the statutory responsibilities from across the ICS, county and city, borough and district partners. This would allow for greater ability, through collaboration, to affect change within the health and social care systems which are struggling within Norfolk at present.
6. **Agree a Skills Deal and leading role in design of Local Skills Plans** based on local labour market and economic needs
- A collaboration of partners could take on a more active role as economic champions – a key way of doing this is empowering through consolidating funding and powers around skills plans development
  - Effective delivery of the devolved Adult Education Budget will be reliant on creating strong links with skills plans for the area to enable growth
  - Ability to seek delegation of DWP functions and funding
7. **Power over infrastructure** to drive growth
- A number of existing MCAs have created Land Commissions with the aim of developing creative approaches to use of land, for example through innovative processes and ownership models (e.g. Community Land Trusts and Public-Commons Partnerships).
  - Ability for Mayoral Development Corporations to issue development bonds similar to the model previously seen in Milton Keynes

## What happens next

All the following steps need to be completed to enable a Deal to proceed:

The County Council's Cabinet will meet in the summer to consider the results of this public consultation, decide whether to proceed and, if so, submit the consultation results to the Government

All County Councillors will be asked in the December 2023 Full Council Meeting whether they support the move to an elected leader and cabinet system of governance

In spring 2024, Parliament will decide whether to approve the 'statutory instrument' required to let the Deal proceed.

If the deal is not agreed, nothing changes. This means that Norfolk would not receive the investment outlined in the deal, nor the powers and governance that accompany it. Given that a proposed deal has undergone significant negotiation with Government, if it is rejected, we would expect that, if there was a desire to seek devolution in the future, other areas would be prioritised above Norfolk.

How we will make our decision and report back to you

We will take a report about the findings of this consultation to the County Council's Cabinet in June.

Our County Councillors will consider the consultation responses we receive very carefully. In particular, they will consider:

The impact of any proposal on individuals, groups of communities and on people identified as having 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010. The protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation. As well as this equality impact assessment, councillors will consider the impact of proposals on rural areas.

The views of people, partners and other stakeholders consulted.

The evidence of need and what is proven to work effectively and well.

The financial and legal positions and any constraints at the time.

Any potential alternative options, models, or ideas for making savings.


**You can send back a paper feedback form to:**

Freepost Plus RTCL-XSTT-JZSK, Norfolk County Council, Ground floor – south wing, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH.

However, if you want to help the council save money, please use a stamp, and send to this address: Stakeholder and Consultation Team, Norfolk County Council, Ground floor – south wing, County Hall, Martineau Lane, NR1 2DH.

You may wish to keep a copy of your response to our consultation for your own records.

Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this document and respond.

 <p><b>IN</b> <b>TRAN</b> communication for all</p>	<p>If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please email us at <a href="mailto:haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk">haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk</a> or contact Customer Services on 0344 800 8020 or Text Relay on 18001 0344 800 8020 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.</p>
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