

Devolution – Government consultation on proposals to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk – response by North Norfolk District Council

Executive Summary	This report provides details of the Council’s proposed response to the Government consultation on proposals to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk
Options considered	Detailed within the proposed response
Consultation(s)	NNDC member briefing – 11 th February 2025 Town and Parish Council briefings held on 18 th and 25 th February 2025
Recommendations	Council is asked to approve the Council’s response to the Government consultation on proposals to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk as attached at Appendix 1 of this report and agree its submission to Government, such submission to be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
Reasons for recommendations	To respond constructively to the Government’s proposals to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk through providing responses which seek to promote and protect the interests of North Norfolk’s residents, communities and businesses.
Background papers	Details of the Government consultation can be accessed via the following link:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://consult.communities.gov.uk/lggc/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution-consultation

Wards affected	All
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr T Adams, Leader of the Council
Contact Officer	Steve Blatch, Chief Executive, steve.blatch@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	A Strong, Responsible, & Accountable Council.
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	Not applicable
Council Policies & Strategies	Not applicable

Corporate Governance:

Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	No
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	None

1. Introduction & Background

- 1.1 On 16th December 2024, the Government published its [English Devolution White Paper](#) which set out plans to move power out of Westminster to local communities, and proposing that every part of England would be covered by a devolution agreement, with a strong preference for elected mayors operating through new Combined Mayoral Authorities.
- 1.2 Subsequently, through conversations with the Leaders of Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, the Government advised that it wanted to see proposals developed for a Mayoral Combined County Authority covering the geography of the two counties. This position has been agreed, in principle, by the Government which has included Norfolk and Suffolk in its Devolution Priority Programme, where proposals for new combined authorities will be developed and implemented in the coming months, with an election for a Norfolk and Suffolk mayor to be held in May 2026.
- 1.3 Before taking a decision on whether to proceed with the making of the necessary legislation, the Government is seeking views from interested parties, including those who live and work in the area. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has therefore recently announced a public consultation with residents, community organisations, businesses and other stakeholders inviting comments on these proposals details of which can be found at - <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/lqgc/norfolk-and-suffolk-devolution-consultation>.
- 1.4 This report, through the attached appendix, proposes North Norfolk District Council's response to the Government consultation – for which comments need to be submitted by 13th April 2025.

2. Proposals and Options

- 2.1 As a district council in Norfolk, with powers and responsibilities for a range of issues (planning, housing, economic growth, environmental management and protection) which support delivery of the Government's Plan for Change and future economic growth, it is considered important that the authority submits a response to this consultation.
- 2.2 A draft response to the consultation is therefore provided as an appendix to this covering report. Council is therefore invited to discuss the Council's draft response and indicate its approval as the basis of the Council's corporate response to the consultation.

3. Comments from the S151 Officer

There are no direct financial costs arising from the Council submitting a response to this consultation.

4. Comments from the Monitoring Officer

Following the Government's White Paper around Devolution, a consultation has been published by MHCLG for which a proposed response is attached on behalf of this Council. Whilst a response to a consultation has no specific legal implications in itself, such comments can be considered before any significant decision is made which would have a financial geographical and constitutional impact upon this and other councils in Norfolk and Suffolk.

5. Risks

- 5.1 The establishment of a Mayoral Combined County Authority for Norfolk and Suffolk will have some implications in the short-term for the way in which the District Council works, but the details of this are not known at present.
- 5.2 The English Devolution White Paper also proposes that in those areas of England which have a two-tier structure of County and District Councils, the Government wishes to see a move to a unitary form of local government. These issues are detailed in a separate report on this Council agenda.

6. Net Zero Target

- 7.1 Not applicable to this report.

7. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 7.1 Not applicable to this report

8. Community Safety issues

- 8.1 Not applicable to this report.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

Council is asked to approve the Council's response to the Government consultation on proposals to establish a Mayoral Combined County Authority as attached at Appendix 1 of this report and agree its submission to Government, such submission to be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.