

Norfolk & Suffolk Framework Document for devolution

1) Devolution Deal for Growth in Norfolk and Suffolk

Devolution offers an exciting opportunity for greater local decision making and influence to power economic growth and productivity and unlock the potential of Norfolk and Suffolk. The two counties have the scale, ambition and leadership to maximise the opportunities offered by additional freedoms and responsibilities. We also have the potential to grow our economy faster, with strengths in key sectors such as agri-tech, food & health, energy and the digital economy.

Norfolk and Suffolk also bring geographic and economic scale and clout, creating an economic entity on a similar scale as City Regions such as Liverpool and Sheffield, with a much faster growing population. Our proposals bring a strong voice for our largest economic centres of Greater Norwich and Ipswich, while also reflecting the role of our other major towns and their economies, our market towns and rural areas.

Our strengths are diverse and powerful:

- National hubs for key business sectors, eg financial industries, that need to be nurtured to become magnets for global inward investment
- An all-energy coast at the centre of the world's largest market for offshore wind
- Globally-leading research in life sciences and agri-tech, and pioneering technical innovations in ICT research and development.
- The UK's busiest container port, in Felixstowe
- A fast-growing creative digital sector, with Norwich recently recognised by Tech City UK
- Market-leading food and drink producers
- Our first-class cultural heritage attractions mean tourism is worth £4.6bn annually across Norfolk and Suffolk.

The economies and sector strengths of our two counties are similar, and are stronger by working together - we are proof that cross border collaboration can work. We already have an Enterprise Zone with sites in both counties, an innovative and effective Clinical Commissioning Group across Gt Yarmouth and Waveney, two City Deals for Norwich and Ipswich, a Local Transport Body and Skills Board led by the LEP, both County Councils and business.

Our Enterprise Zone in Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft has consistently been one of the country's best performing zones, creating more than 1,300 jobs by May 2015 and £29m of private sector investment. We were the first EZ to introduce Local Development Orders on all our sites.

However, our ambitions have often been hampered by a lack of ability to influence the economic levers which accelerate the pace of growth. Our employment figures are among the best in the country, but our skills and productivity levels are below the national average. We need to tackle this problem head on, if we are to shift our economy to the next gear and compete and win on a global stage.

Growing the economy and improving productivity, underpinned by public service reform (particularly around the integration of health, care and safety), means that we

feel devolution provides a framework to improve the opportunities and life chances for the people of Norfolk and Suffolk.

We want to work more effectively together with Government to achieve a radically re-set relationship between central and local public services and local people. One that is enabling and responsible; one that is adaptable and progressive and one that works in driving growth, enabling opportunity and delivering a more efficient public sector that influences better outcomes.

2) For Growth, the Norfolk and Suffolk devolution deal is focused on:

- a) *Economic Growth & Productivity* - For example, building on the existing architecture to:
 - i) Develop a network of rural Enterprise Zones focussed on: agri-tech, food and health and digital economy that link our beacons of innovation Norwich Research Park and Adastral Park in Ipswich;
 - ii) Better connecting our universities with our businesses to drive innovation and productivity
 - iii) Enhance the New Anglia Growth Hub;
 - iv) Create a joined up approach to attract inward investment;
 - v) Create a Productivity Commission to help tackle root causes of our productivity gap
 - vi) Devolve decision making over EU funding programmes

- b) *Physical Assets & Infrastructure* - For example:
 - i) Devolution of funding and decision making for investment in a modern transport system with a secure future, based on local economic priorities that will develop employment and housing sites across the two counties
 - ii) Offering a single integrated transport strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk, in return, for greater certainty and influence over transport funding (with a 5-10 year settlement for local transport schemes). (powers to manage the local road network
 - iii) Greater influence over the rail franchise and capital programme
 - iv) Shaping and influencing the priorities for electricity and water supply investment, to support key locations in anticipation of planned growth
 - v) Roll out of the city-based broadband connectivity voucher system to SMEs in rural areas
 - vi) Working with Government to tackle the challenge of poor mobile network coverage in both counties

- c) *Employment & Skills* – ensuring that our residents are able to use the full potential of their skills in driving productivity and growth. For example by:

- i) Designing a new local employment service that helps people to progress into work and reduces dependency on benefits and can deliver Universal Credit
- ii) Devolved responsibility for the Apprenticeship Grant and successor schemes
- iii) Co-commissioning with Government all post 16 education and skills provision and the next round of the Work Programme
- iv) As part of the New Anglia Youth Pledge deliver the Youth obligation building on the MyGo service (first established in Ipswich as part of its City Deal) financed through a shared investment model with government
- v) Extend the adult loan system to include 19-23 year olds within the existing funding envelope so that adults skills training is open to all who can benefit

d) *Coherent Planning & Housing* – developing a housing offer that maximises growth and better supports people’s health and wellbeing by:

- i) Creating a joined up Strategic Plan which aligns and integrates all the different strategies, supported by local delivery plans – so that decision making on developments can be made closer to the communities they are part of
- ii) Establishing an Investment Fund for Growth, to drive infrastructure to support growth and move money quickly to where it’s needed.
- iii) Working with Government to identify new settlements/garden cities in conjunction with the Homes and Community Agency, using its powers and resources to plan and deliver
- iv) Certainty over New Homes Bonus allocations to allow increased borrowing and infrastructure investment
- v) Influence over the investment plans of significant utilities – currently investment in utilities is often out of step with and holding back both local employment and housing developments with no mechanism for local engagement or influence
- vi) Greater CPO powers to overcome barriers to land assembly, tackling stalled sites and challenging land banking
- vii) Becoming a “Planning Reform Pathfinder” to work government and the sector to radically re-think the local plan process to maintain an up to date land supply, provide certainty for developers and reduce the necessity for systematic local plan reviews.

e) *Action on Flood Risk* – for example by:

- i) Creating a fully integrated approach to flood and coastal management in order to deliver additional economic growth (and address the fact that 1 in 5 Norfolk properties are at risk of flooding)

- ii) Devolution of the flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) functions in Norfolk and Suffolk
 - iii) Increased support from government for a more locally joined up approach to flood management and coastal defences
- f) *Finance* – We want to establish a different relationship with Government, where greater local autonomy creates a system that is more locally self-sufficient than reliant on central grants. This should be enabled by:
- i) More flexibility to deliver our ambitions and manage the risks we are taking on.
 - ii) Exploring Business Rate retention options
 - iii) First rights on central government estates and local autonomy over public sector estates (including NHS) to unlock sites for employment and housing as well as smarter use of public assets

3) For Wider Public Service Reform the devolution deal for Norfolk and Suffolk will focus on:

- a) *Education* – it is vital that young people have access to excellent education and training to help them realise their ambitions and be well equipped to be successful adults. We are seeking a long term devolution programme delivered in partnership with government that will use every possible lever to raise education standards by:
- i) Flexibility to agree local priorities with the Regional Schools Commissioner regarding effective school performance for all children
 - ii) Greater freedoms to dispose of surplus school sites (including playing fields) so we can reinvest the capital receipts to secure enough school places in our growing communities.
 - iii) Flexibility to set local policies for school transport and the power to require a financial contribution where changes to school times/term dates result in increased transport costs so we can meet our rural challenges and prioritise vulnerable and low income families.
 - iv) An extension in the scope of the proposed Post-16 Area Review process to include school sixth form provision to enable us to strengthen our A' Level offer in the context of greater demand for STEM skills and diminishing resources/rurality.
- b) *Health, Care and Safety* – we want people to be able to live as healthily, safely and independently as possible for as long as possible and if needed, that they receive early and joined up public sector support. To do this, we need the following to be different:
- i) Devolved multi-year settlements for health, care and safety
 - ii) Freedom from centrally prescribed performance reporting and freedom to set unified, locally appropriate, outcomes based

measures across the system and negotiate with national inspectorates and regulators.

- iii) Local control over local public service estates and capital assets, including NHS and police to unlock assets across Suffolk's public services.
- iv) Explicit and specific support from Government departments that provides mandated authority from Whitehall to the local public sector.
- v) More local control over skills funding to enable better, joined up workforce development and attract the best health, care and teaching professionals also boosting our economy
- vi) Flexibilities to support better integrated IT across public sector organisations

Public Sector reform is an essential element of our Devolution Deal and will need to be progressed by the two counties, either together or separately as circumstances dictate.

Subsidiarity and 'Double Devolution'

At the heart of our devolution proposal is the principle of subsidiarity – the devolution of powers and decision making to the most appropriate level of government and geographic area. The importance of meaningful double devolution based on District Council, district clusters and pairings or City Deal areas will be addressed in the development of the arrangements for the Combined Authority.

The content of the double devolution will be appropriate to local county circumstances and each area will look at specific powers, decision making and funding streams which could be addressed. This work will commence now and proceed in parallel with the work on growth and wider public sector reform.