

# Norfolk County Council

## Extraordinary Meeting

Date: **Monday 7 November 2016**

Time: **10.00 a.m**

Venue: **Council Chamber, County Hall, Norwich**

Persons attending the meeting are requested to turn off mobile phones.

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### **Prayers**

### **To Call the Roll**

### **AGENDA**

1. **To receive any announcements from the Chairman**
2. **Members to Declare any Interests**

If you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter to be considered at the meeting and that interest is on your Register of Interests you must not speak or vote on the matter. It is recommended that you declare that interest but it is not a legal requirement.

If you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter to be considered at the meeting and that interest is not on your Register of Interests you must declare that interest at the meeting and not speak or vote on the matter.

In either case you may remain in the room where the meeting is taking place. If you consider that it would be inappropriate in the circumstances to remain in the room, you may leave the room while the matter is dealt with.

If you do not have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest you may nevertheless have an Other Interest in a matter to be discussed if it affects:

- your well being or financial position
- that of your family or close friends
- that of a club or society in which you have a management role
- that of another public body of which you are a member to a greater extent than others in your ward.

If that is the case then you must declare such an interest but can speak and vote on the matter.

### 3. **Norfolk and Suffolk Devolution** Report by the Leader of the Council

(Page 3)

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**Norfolk and Suffolk Devolution  
Report by The Leader of The Council**

**Background:** Norfolk County Council last debated devolution on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

Since then, much has happened, including a change of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the withdrawal of four of Norfolk's district councils from the process and the completion and publication of a Norfolk-wide consultation.

The purpose of this paper is to update Full Council on the progress towards devolution, inform members of changes that have taken place since June's meeting, and, in the light of the changed landscape, to give the Leader an opportunity to hear your views on his continued involvement in the final phase of devolution discussions.

**Recommendation:**

**Members are asked to:**

1. **Note** the progress that has been made since 27<sup>th</sup> June, including the proposals developed since then in relation to decision-making and the mayors powers
2. **Agree** for Norfolk County Council's Leader to continue his involvement in the devolution discussions in readiness for the decision on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016.

## **1) Introduction**

On 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016, Norfolk County Council endorsed the signing of the Norfolk and Suffolk Devolution Agreement by the Leader. [\(the relevant Council papers link here\)](#)

The Council also endorsed and supported the publication of the draft Scheme of Governance for a Norfolk and Suffolk Mayoral Combined Authority for consultation.

At the same time, Councillors agreed that further reports are presented to the Council, as appropriate, as the devolution process develops.

Since the June meeting, a number of changes have taken place:

- a) Four of Norfolk's district councils voted not to endorse the deal and so withdrew from the current process
- b) An extensive consultation was completed, on 23<sup>rd</sup> August, and a summary of the consultation responses was sent to the Secretary of State on 9<sup>th</sup> September, with the full results and summary sent to all members on 5<sup>th</sup> September and posted on the [www.eastangliadevo.co.uk](http://www.eastangliadevo.co.uk) website. Members also had the opportunity to hear directly from Ipsos Mori on 14<sup>th</sup> October at meetings in King's Lynn and Norwich. ([the consultation, summary presentation and video link here](#))
- c) Continued work on voting and decision-making arrangements including the practical functioning of the Combined Authority

Against this backdrop, we have seen a new Prime Minister and a major change in Cabinet roles, including a new Chancellor and a new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

These changes led to a great deal of speculation as to the likely future of the government's devolution agenda.

On 27<sup>th</sup> October, Sajid Javid, the new Secretary of State at the DCLG, visited County Hall and spoke to the leaders of Norfolk councils still participating in the process, together with representatives from the LEP and business, and was able to clarify the government's position.

- The Prime Minister, Chancellor and Secretary of State have reviewed the devolution programme and all back the approach. A Mayor is a non-negotiable element for any ambitious deal. The Norfolk and Suffolk deal is considered ambitious and will therefore need a Mayor
- Processes are in place to allow the 4 non participating authorities to join as non-constituent members and then as constituent members once the

Combined Authority is established. Even as non-constituent members the Combined Authority can give them voting rights.

## **2. Governance Scheme**

The Governance Scheme was considered by Council at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June and subsequently published for consultation. Since that meeting work has continued to reflect members' concerns around the voting arrangements and the mayoral powers. In particular provisions have been developed to ensure

- Parity of voting between Norfolk and Suffolk to the extent possible
- Plans and strategies are developed by consensus, including the mayor
- Existing organisations and partnerships are used wherever possible for delivery
- Cost and bureaucracy are minimised

The Leader has asked officers to prepare a presentation for this meeting to brief members on the powers, voting arrangements and practical functioning of the Combined Authority.

### **Summary**

To quote the Secretary of State

"It is a very generous deal, in fact I think it is one of the most generous deals in the country. I am keen that we devolve significant powers and resources away from Whitehall to the people of Norfolk and Suffolk. I don't want the region to miss out on this historic deal which would make a real positive difference to the lives of local residents"

"Even without the missing Councils it is a really good economic area and it makes a lot of sense, but I hope that the opted-out Councils will join in the future".

This report updates on progress since the meeting in June. We now have clarity from Government following the meeting with Secretary of State on 27 October. Members have been briefed on governance developments which will be reflected in the draft Order, programmed to be considered by Council on 21 November.