

Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Thursday 18 May 2023**

Time: **10 am**

Venue: **Council Chamber, County Hall, Martineau Lane,
Norwich NR1 2DH**

Membership:

Cllr Steve Morpew (Chair)	
Cllr Daniel Elmer (V Chair)	
Cllr Carl Annison	Cllr Ed Maxfield
Cllr Lesley Bambridge	Cllr Jamie Osborn
Cllr Phillip Duigan	Vacancy
Cllr Tom FitzPatrick	Cllr Brian Watkins
Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris	
Cllr Keith Kiddie	
Cllr Brian Long	

Parent Governor Representatives

Vacancy
Vacancy

Church Representatives

Ms H Bates
Mr Paul Dunning

Advice for members of the public:

This meeting will be held in public and in person.

It will be live streamed on YouTube and members of the public may watch remotely by clicking on the following link: [Norfolk County Council YouTube](#)

We also welcome attendance in person, but public seating is limited, so if you wish to attend please indicate in advance by emailing committees@norfolk.gov.uk

We have amended the previous guidance relating to respiratory infections to reflect current practice but we still ask everyone attending to maintain good hand and respiratory hygiene

and, at times of high prevalence and in busy areas, please consider wearing a face covering.

Please stay at home if you are unwell, have tested positive for COVID 19, have symptoms of a respiratory infection or if you are a close contact of a positive COVID 19 case. This will help make the event safe for attendees and limit the transmission of respiratory infections including COVID-19.

A g e n d a

1 To receive apologies and details of any substitute members attending

2 Minutes

(Page 5)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2023

3. 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.

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, to a greater extent than others in your division

- Your wellbeing or financial position, or
- that of your family or close friends
- Any body -
 - Exercising functions of a public nature.
 - Directed to charitable purposes; or
 - One of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union);

Of which you are in a position of general control or management.

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

4 Public Question Time

Fifteen minutes for questions from members of the public of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by **5pm on Friday 12 May 2023**. For guidance on submitting a public question, please visit <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/councillors-meetings-decisions-and-elections/committees-agendas-and-recent-decisions/ask-a-question-to-a-committee>

5 Local Member Issues/Questions

Fifteen minutes for local member to raise issues of concern of which due notice has been given. Please note that all questions must be received by the Committee Team (committees@norfolk.gov.uk) by **5pm on Friday 12 May 2023**

6 To note that the deadline for calling-in matters, from the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 10 May 2023 was 4pm on Wednesday 17 May 2023

7 Committee Terms of Reference (Page 10)

8 County Deal – Consultation Outcomes and Next Steps. (Page 19) Report from Executive Director of Strategy & Transformation

9 Local First Inclusion Programme (Page 230) Report from Executive Director of Children's Services

10 Performance Review Panels – Quarterly Update (To Follow) Report from Executive Director of Children's Service and Executive Director of Adult Social Services

11 Appointment to the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership – Scrutiny Sub Panel (To Follow) Report from Executive Director Strategy & Transformation

12 Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme (To Follow) Report from Executive Director of Strategy & Transformation

Tom McCabe
Head of Paid Service
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
NR1 2DH

Date Agenda Published: 10 May 2023



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Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 20 April 2023
at 10 am at County Hall Norwich

Present:

Cllr Steve Morpew (Chair)
Cllr Lana Hemsall (Vice Chair)

Cllr Carl Annison
Cllr Lesley Bambridge
Cllr Phillip Duigan
Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris
Cllr Keith Kiddie
Cllr Brian Long

Cllr Ed Maxfield
Cllr Jamie Osborn
Cllr Brian Watkins
Cllr Fran Whymark (substitute for Cllr Richard Price)

Also, present (who took a part in the meeting):

Cllr Bill Borrett	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention
Cllr Andrew Jamieson	Cabinet Member for Finance
Gary Heathcote	Director of Commissioning, Adult Social Care
Susanne Baldwin	Assistant Director Workforce, Markets and Brokerage, Adult Social Care
Tim Weller	Head of Integrated Quality Service, Adult Social Care
Christine Futter	Chief Operating Officer, Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support Ltd (who joined the meeting remotely)
Kat Hulatt	Head of Legal Services
Peter Randall	Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager
Tim Shaw	Committee Officer

1A Opening remarks by the Chair --Former County Councillor Barry Duffin

The Chair asked Members of the Committee to hold a minute's silence, for the sad passing of Barry Duffin, Councillor for West Depwade, who died on Easter Sunday following an accident. Barry was an active member of the Scrutiny Committee. He also served on Norse and other Committees and had recently been appointed Vice Chair of Corporate Select Committee. Known for his hard work and commitment Barry was respected and liked by colleagues across the wide political spectrum; he would be missed.

1B Apologies for Absence

- 1B.1 Apologies were received from, Cllr Richard Price, Ms Helen Bates (Church Representative) and Mr Paul Dunning (Church Representative).

2 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 16 March 2023 and 22 March 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 Cllr Ed Maxfield declared an “other interest” because he worked for a charity that was in receipt of funding from Norfolk County Council.

4. Public Question Time

- 4.1 There were no public questions

5. Local Member Issues/Questions

- 5.1 There were no local member issues/questions.

6 Call In

- 6.1 The Committee noted that there were no call-in items.

7 Update on Recommendations to Cabinet from the Scrutiny Committee

- 7.1 The annexed report (7) was received.
- 7.2 The Scrutiny Committee received a report that set out the Cabinet response to recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee and discussed whether further action was required.
- 7.3 The response by the Cabinet and the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee on 6 March 2023 on the topic of Education Health and Care Plans was noted. It was **agreed** to examine this issue further at a future meeting and in particular what progress was being made in supporting families and children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities going through the appeals process and reduce the length of time that the appeal process took to complete.

8. Adult Social Care – Overview of Care Market Quality and Improvement

- 8.1 The annexed report (8) was received.
- 8.2 The Scrutiny Committee received a report that provided an update on the current quality of care provision in Norfolk and the progress and impact of the improvement actions undertaken to date and planned.

- 8.3 During discussion of the report with Cllr Bill Borrett, (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention), Gary Heathcote, (Director of Commissioning), Susanne Baldwin (Assistant Director Workforce, Markets and Brokerage), Tim Weller (Head of Integrated Quality Service) and Christine Futter (Chief Operating Officer, Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support Ltd) who joined the meeting remotely, the following key points were noted:
- The Committee examined the quality of the care market in Norfolk and the role of Adult Social Services in overseeing the care market now and in the future.
 - The provision of Adult Social Care was a complicated mix of state-funded and privately financed care, provided in Norfolk by more than 450 independently owned businesses of various sizes, at prices determined by local market forces and the funding available to the Council.
 - Officers said that they were familiar with the workings of the Norfolk care market and the local geographical challenges that it faced. They understood their duties to shape the care market but do not control all the levers that were needed to do this effectively.
 - The County Council did, however, have a market sustainability plan to address the current market sustainability issues within residential, nursing and domiciliary care markets.
 - It was pointed out that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulated care providers for quality and reviewed and assessed local authority performance. There was, however, insufficient CQC capacity to undertake timely reviews of providers who were demonstrating significant quality improvements.
 - Officers said that there was a close relationship between CQC's current inspection requirements and the Provider Assessment and Market Management Solution (PAMMS) (an online assessment tool used to help assess the quality of care delivered by providers of adult social care services). PAMMS was used by most of the 11 authorities in the East of England and enabled an objective quality audit to be undertaken. It helped identify where Adult Social Services could provide additional support, signposting or referral to expert teams.
 - Members asked for the relationship between PAMMS and the work of the CQC in demonstrating significant quality improvements to be explored in more detail.
 - The Committee noted that there were significant variations in quality-of-care provision across Norfolk. There was no one area of the county that had good quality in all service types of care. Members said that they would welcome more detail about the care market at the local level as it was recognised that there were specific challenges in delivering services in some areas of the County.
 - The Committee discussed detailed issues of workforce resilience and provider sustainability.
 - Officers said that following Covid there was a high turnover and vacancy rates among the care workforce, as the sector struggled to compete with other industries on pay and conditions. The position in filling care vacancies had now started to improve.
 - Officers said that they would be working with the integrated Care Board to review the current care definitions and what was needed to ensure that the market was sustainable.

- The Cabinet Member said that current demographic trends in Norfolk suggested a greater demand for care and increasingly complex care needs in the future, resulting in care forming an ever-increasing proportion of the Council's expenditure. Future reforms were being put in place to tackle these growing challenges.
- The Cabinet Member also referred to strategic transformation projects which were already in place to help identify opportunities to re-shape the market and ensure that services were delivered in the best possible way.
- In reply to questions, it was pointed out that the Connecting Communities transformation programme was working in partnership with front line teams, voluntary sector partners, providers, and districts councils to shape new ways of working to help people live the lives they wanted.
- The Collaborative Care Market Review project was working with providers and the Integrated Care Board to review current service models and current and future projected demand to identify what needed to be done differently to ensure that there was a stable residential sector in Norfolk.
- In reply to questions from the Chair, it was pointed out that Adult Social Services would be willing to assist care providers in any way that it could who for one reason or another were looking to exit the care market.
- It was noted that the Council planned to follow through on key commitments it had made to develop a workforce strategy, to enhance training and career development and tackle recruitment and retention challenges, aligned with the NHS People Plan, where appropriate.
- The vacancy levels for social care workers within residential and nursing homes varied across the county. The highest levels were in North Norfolk which had some of the most expensive housing in the county. Disproportionately high-cost housing and land values in some areas of the county made it difficult to recruit and retain staff as they could not afford to buy or rent in these areas.
- Members of the Committee spoke about how in conjunction with District Councils and other partner organisations the County Council needed to develop a strategy for improving the experience of the workforce and in particular the range of accommodation and housing needed for those providing social care.

8.4 **The Committee RESOLVED:**

That the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee take up the following issues with the Chair of People and Communities Committee before Scrutiny Committee decide on those issues that should be brought back to Scrutiny Committee as part of its future work programme:

- **The relationship between Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection requirements and the assessments made by the Provider Assessment and Market Management Solution (PAMMS) (an online assessment tool used to help assess the quality of care delivered by providers of adult social care services) in assessing the quality of care provided in Norfolk. The Scrutiny Committee noted that PAMMS was used by most of the authorities in the East of England and enabled an objective**

quality audit to be undertaken. It helped identify where Adult Social Services could provide additional support, signposting or referral to expert teams.

- The impact the current cost of living squeeze was having on the development of the care market.
- Place based solutions to how the care market in Norfolk could be developed.
- How the County Council's plans to improve the long-term stability of the Norfolk care market was linked to other community strategies and those of its partners at a time of increasing demand for care. It was noted that current demographic trends in Norfolk suggested a greater demand for care and increasingly complex care needs in the future, resulting in care forming an ever-increasing proportion of the Council's expenditure.
- The Scrutiny Committee noted the Council's plans to follow through on key commitments it had made to enhance training and career development for social workers and to tackle recruitment and retention challenges. The plans needed to be broadened out to include more work with District Councils and other partner organisations to develop a strategy for improving the living experience of the workforce and the range of local accommodation and affordable housing they needed.

9 Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

9.1 The annexed report (9) was received.

9.2 RESOLVED

That the Committee:

Note the current forward work programme as set out in the appendix to the report (which would be discussed in detail at a training session for Scrutiny Committee members at the end of this meeting)

The meeting concluded at 11.30 pm

Chair

Scrutiny Committee

Item No: 7

Report Title: Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference

Date of Meeting: 18 May 2023

Responsible Cabinet Member: None

Responsible Director: None

Executive Summary

This annual paper serves as an opportunity for members to note and consider the sections of the NCC Constitution that relate to the operation and powers of the Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendations

Members of the committee are asked to:

1. Note the following documents with relation to the powers and procedures of the Scrutiny Committee:
 - Excerpt from Part 7 of the NCC Constitution - Overview and Scrutiny Bodies (pg. 115-118).
 - Excerpt from Part 7A of the NCC Constitution – Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (pg. 123-124).

1. Background and Purpose

- 1.1 This is an annual standing item for the Scrutiny Committee – allowing members the opportunity to note the current powers and operating procedures for overview and scrutiny arrangements at Norfolk County Council.
- 1.2 The two documents appended are both excerpts from the NCC constitution, the full text of which can be found [here](#).
 - Appendix A is an excerpt from Part 7 of the NCC constitution. This provides a high-level outline of overview and scrutiny arrangements at NCC, detailing how the Scrutiny Committee is appointed, alongside its powers and composition.

- Appendix B is an Excerpt from Part 7A of the NCC Constitution. This provides members with an outline of the Scrutiny Committee procedure rules.
- 1.3 This item is only to note. The role of Scrutiny is set out in the Constitution, which is adopted and maintained by Full Council (barring minor changes and corrections which can be made by the monitoring officer in accordance with the powers delegated to them).
 - 1.4 The next iteration of this report will come to committee in May 2024. If changes are made to the constitution by Full Council which impact the role or operation of the Scrutiny Committee in the intervening time, then a further iteration of this report will be taken to the next scheduled meeting of the Scrutiny Committee. This report will outline changes and ensure members are aware of the implications for Scrutiny moving forward.

2. Recommendations

Members of the committee are asked to:

2. Note the following documents with relation to the powers and procedures of the Scrutiny Committee:
 - Excerpt from Part 7 of the NCC Constitution - Overview and Scrutiny Bodies (pg. 115-118).
 - Excerpt from Part 7A of the NCC Constitution – Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (pg. 123-124).

3. Background Papers

- 3.1. **Appendix A** – Excerpt from Part 7 of the NCC Constitution - Overview and Scrutiny Bodies (pg. 115-118).
- 3.2. **Appendix B** – Excerpt from Part 7A of the NCC Constitution – Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (pg. 123-124).

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained within this paper, please get in touch with:

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Appendix A

1. Scrutiny Committee

- 1.1 The Council appoints the Scrutiny Committee from among the non-executive Members of the Council to review or scrutinise decisions made or other action taken in accordance with:
- a) any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive, including decisions made/actions taken directly by the Executive itself and those decisions/actions delegated to Chief Officers and individual Members of the Executive; and
 - b) any functions which are not the responsibility of the Executive.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Committee may make reports or recommendations to either the Cabinet or to the County Council with respect to:
- a) the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the Executive;
 - b) the discharge of any functions which are not the responsibility of the Executive; or
 - c) matters which affect Norfolk or its inhabitants.
- 1.3 The Scrutiny Committee:**
- a) exercises overall responsibility for the resources made available to it by the Council;
 - b) conducts its proceedings in accordance with the additional Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in [Part 7A](#).
- 1.4 Membership of the Scrutiny Committee**
- a) The Committee comprises 13 Members of the Council who are not Members of the Executive, two Parent Governor representatives and one representative of each of the Church of England and Roman Catholic Diocesan Boards. The Council Members will be appointed to reflect the political balance requirements.
 - b) The Committee will be chaired by the Chair who will be appointed by the Council and who will normally be the Leader of the main Opposition Group on the Council.
 - c) The Parent Governor and Church representatives are entitled to speak on all matters considered by the Scrutiny Committee but vote only on matters relating to education.
 - d) The quorum for meetings of the Scrutiny Committee is seven.

1.5 Powers of the Scrutiny Committee: Call-in of decisions

- a) In carrying out its powers of review and scrutiny the Scrutiny Committee will take into account the desirability of co-ordination and avoiding duplication with the work of the County Council's Select Committees.
- b) The Scrutiny Committee has the power to 'call-in' for scrutiny all decisions made by the Cabinet but not implemented and recommend that they are reconsidered or be reviewed or scrutinised by the full Council. Call-in is the exercise of the statutory powers under section 9F(2) and 9(F)(4) of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011). A decision that is called in cannot be implemented until the call-in process is completed. A decision can only be called-in once. A cabinet recommendation to Council is not a decision and may not be called in.
- c) The Scrutiny Committee should only use the power to refer matters to the full Council:
 - (i) if the Committee considers that the decision is contrary to the policy framework; or
 - (ii) if the Committee considers that the decision is contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the budget.

Any called-in matters that are considered by full Council under this arrangement will be dealt with in accordance with the full Council procedure rules rather than the scrutiny procedure rules. This means that all Members of the Council may participate, the debate will be chaired by the Chair of the County Council, and there will be no opportunity to question officers.

- d) The Scrutiny Committee also has the power to 'call-in' for scrutiny any decisions (as defined [in Part 4](#)) which are the responsibility of the Executive but taken by an individual Cabinet Member, Joint Committee or officer on the Executive's behalf. The Committee may recommend that the decisions are reconsidered by the person or body which made the decision.
- e) The call-in power is to be taken in accordance with the County Council's system for the call-in of decisions, as follows:
 - (i) any Member of the Council, with the support of three other Members must give notice within five working days of a decision being published under the Access to Information Procedure Rules in Part 11A.

- (ii) where education matters are involved, the Parent Governor and Church representatives together count as one Member;
 - (iii) a Member who has called in a decision may participate in the debate of that call-in by the Scrutiny Committee, irrespective of whether they are a Member of the Scrutiny Committee;
- f) The call-in procedure will not apply to urgent decisions. In this respect:
 - (i) in deciding the urgency of key decisions, paragraphs 5 and 6 of [Part 6B](#) (urgency & special urgency provisions) will apply;
 - (ii) in deciding the urgency of decisions which are contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework, the procedure in Paragraph 5 of the Budget and Policy Framework Rules at [Part 11B](#) will apply;
 - (iii) in all other cases the final decision as to whether a decision is urgent will rest with the Head of Paid Service or in their absence the Monitoring Officer. For this purpose, an urgent decision is one which cannot reasonably wait until the full call-in process would otherwise have been completed.
- g) A request to call-in a decision must be received by the Director of Democratic and Regulatory Services within the period from publication and before date of implementation, and the request to call-in a decision must be made in writing or electronically using the agreed form.

The form must:

- (i) Set out the resolution(s) that the Members wish to call in;
 - (ii) Give the reasons why the Scrutiny Committee should review or scrutinize the decision and consider referring it back to the decision maker;
 - (iii) Whether it is considered to be outside of the budget or policy framework;
 - (iv) Set out the alternative course of action or recommendations they wish to propose; and
 - (v) Be signed and dated by the required Members set out in 1.4 e) above.
- h) The call-in will be deemed valid unless any of the following apply:
 - (i) The procedures set out above have not been properly followed
 - (ii) The decision has been recorded as urgent as set out in 1.4 f) above
 - (iii) The request for call-in is not a proper use of the call-in provisions taking into account the following factors:
 - Where the matter has been considered as part of any pre-decision scrutiny by a scrutiny committee

- Whether there has been any substantive change to the nature of the decision being made since any pre-decision scrutiny of the proposals
 - A decision taken by Cabinet when preparing the annual budget or new policy proposals for submission to Council for decision
- i) If a decision is called-in, it will be added to the agenda of a Scrutiny Committee meeting to be held within 10 working days of the end of the call-in period. If there is no programmed Scrutiny meeting within that time, an extraordinary Scrutiny meeting will be arranged by the Director of Democratic and Regulatory Services to be held within 10 working days (unless the decision maker agrees that the call-in can wait for the next scheduled meeting). The Chair of Scrutiny will be consulted on a suitable date, time and place of the meeting.

1.6 In order to enable it to exercise its powers, the Scrutiny Committee may:

- a) require the Leader, Cabinet Members and officers to attend before it and answer questions; and such Members and officers will attend unless reasonably prevented from doing so;
- b) invite any other person to attend its meetings and answer questions but may not require them to do so;*
- c) question and gather evidence from any person with their consent; and
- d) commission reports from officers.

1.7 The Scrutiny Committee is the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee for the purposes of section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.

*N.B. Reasonable travel expenses are payable on request to members of the public and to members of voluntary organisations who are invited to attend meetings.

Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules

1. The following rules apply to the Scrutiny Committee and its Sub-Committee:

- 1.1 Members of the Cabinet may not serve as ordinary or substitute Members of the Scrutiny Committee. Deputy Cabinet Members may not serve on the Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.2 The Scrutiny Committee should not normally scrutinise individual decisions made by other Committees of the County Council, particularly decisions relating to development control and other permissions.
- 1.3 The views of all Members of the Scrutiny Committee (or Sub-Committee) should be taken into account when deciding the Committee work plans.
- 1.4 The Scrutiny Committee should consider the remit and work plans for the Select Committees and consider adopting an approach that complements and avoids duplication of the Select Committees remit and work plans.
- 1.5 Party whipping will not take place.
- 1.6 The Relevant Chief Officer should present reports and attend meetings.
- 1.7 Reports to the Leader, Cabinet or Council will include the views of Members dissenting from the majority recommendation of the Committee.

2. The following rules apply only to the Scrutiny Committee and its Sub-Committee:

2.1 Agenda Planning

- a) The Chair and the Scrutiny Committee will agree:
 - (i) Which matters the Committee is to scrutinise (except for call-ins); and
 - (ii) Which Members of the Cabinet and officers it requires to attend and answer questions.
- b) For call-in items only, the Chair and the Members calling-in an item will agree which Members of the Cabinet and officers they require to attend and answer questions.

1.1 Questioning

- a) The Chair may permit a Member not on the Scrutiny Committee (including Members of the Cabinet) to speak and ask questions of those being scrutinised

if a matter on the agenda has a particularly significant impact on that Member's division or if the Committee is considering a call-in made by the Member concerned.

- b) Members should endeavour not to request detailed information from officers at meetings of the Committee, unless they have given prior notice through the officer supporting the Committee. If, in the course of question and answer at a meeting of Committee, it becomes apparent that further information would be helpful, the officer being questioned may be required to submit it in writing to the Scrutiny Committee Members.
- c) In the course of questioning at meetings, officers other than the Head of Paid Service and Chief Officers may decline to give information or respond to questions on the ground that it is more appropriate that the question be directed to the Head of Paid Service or relevant Chief Officer. Officers may also decline to provide information to which Members do not have a right of access.
- d) Members of the Executive and officers may decline to answer questions in an open session of the Committee on the grounds that the answer might disclose information that would be exempt or confidential as defined in the Access to Information Procedure Rules. In that event, the Committee may resolve to exclude the media and public in order that questions may be answered in private session.
- e) Anyone other than a Member of the Executive or an officer attending at the invitation of the Committee may decline to answer any question without giving reasons.

2.3 Formulation of Recommendations and Reports

- a) After debate, the Committee will decide whether to report or express comments to the Leader, Cabinet, Cabinet Member, the relevant officer or the Council. There is a legal requirement for the Executive to respond to recommendations within two months of them being made.

Report Title: A County Deal for Norfolk: Consultation and findings

Date of Meeting: 18 May 2023

Responsible Cabinet Member: Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy & Governance

Responsible Director: Paul Cracknell, Executive Director of Strategy and Transformation

Executive Summary

On 8 December 2022 Norfolk County Council (NCC) and the Government agreed, in principle, a new [County Deal for Norfolk](#) designed to transfer significant funding and powers to Norfolk.

On 17 January 2023 Full Council and Cabinet agreed to progress the County Deal and following their decision a six-week public consultation was launched on 6 February 2023.

The results of the consultation are due be considered on 5 June 2023 by Cabinet, who will make a decision about whether to share these results with Government.

If Cabinet agrees to share the consultation results with government, government will use them to inform their decision to proceed to the next stage of Norfolk's in principle deal agreement. Full Council will then be asked in December 2023 whether they endorse the deal and support the move to an elected leader and cabinet system of governance. If this doesn't happen, a Level 3 deal will not be possible.

Scrutiny Members are invited to consider the County Deal consultation outcomes ahead of Cabinet making a decision on sending the responses on to central government, providing feedback and recommendations where appropriate.

Recommendations

1. Members are asked to consider the County Deal consultation findings and to provide feedback and recommendations where appropriate.

1. Background and Purpose

1.1. On 8 December 2022, Norfolk County Council and the Government agreed in principle a County Deal, to transfer more funding and powers to the county. The Deal text makes it clear that the County Council and Government are "minded" to agree the deal and that further steps will be taken before a final decision.

1.2. On 17 January 2023, Full Council discussed the proposed County Deal for Norfolk and then Cabinet decided to progress it.

1.3. The Deal states;

1.3.1. The proposals in this devolution deal are subject to ratification by Norfolk County Council through their normal executive decision-making processes. The implementation of the deal will require consultation with other public sector partners including city, district and borough councils as well as local communities and business on the proposals. Implementation is also subject to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities being satisfied that the required statutory requirements have been met.

1.4. Therefore in order to satisfy this part of the Deal, the Cabinet must have had an opportunity to consider the results of the consultation and should, if satisfied, return them to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

1.5. The public consultation has not been a statutory requirement of the County Deal. The aim of the consultation has been to share the County Deal proposals with residents, businesses, networks and other key stakeholders, and to gauge opinion on whether the Deal is likely to improve both the exercise of statutory functions, and the economic, social and environmental well-being of some or all of the people who live or work, in Norfolk. It has also sought to provide a richer understanding of both the concerns and the opportunities resulting from the Deal to inform implementation.

1.6. The purpose of this report is to provide an update related specifically to the consultation process, results and findings for members to discuss ahead of the June Cabinet meeting.

2. Consultation approach and process

2.1. The Norfolk Devolution Deal agreement set out that a public consultation on the Deal proposals must be undertaken with:

- public sector partners including district and borough councils;

- local communities; and,
- other sectors such as local businesses and voluntary organisations

2.2. Our public consultation ran between 6th February and 23 March 2023. The County Council worked with representatives of the Department for Levelling Up to design and agree the approach, to ensure that the consultation reflects [the Government principles for consultation](#). The decision to undertake the consultation at this point was to inform all ongoing development in respect of the approach to devolution and assess general public support in respect of devolution itself. As Norfolk moves through its devolution journey it will continue to engage the public, businesses, local authorities and the third sector.

2.3. The content of consultation has covered:

- Each of the functions, powers and funding to be devolved
- Why the devolution of each of the funding, powers and responsibilities to Norfolk is likely to improve their delivery and benefit Norfolk
- Proposed changes in governance arrangements.

2.4. The consultation provided information to residents to assist them to give their views in a helpful and formative way. In order to ensure that the consultation included a meaningful sample size and a good geographic distribution of respondents, as well as engage the breadth of the local business community to at least the same level as local communities, the activities as described below were wide ranging to ensure maximum engagement.

2.5. The main method of collecting responses was through a consultation survey hosted on Citizen Space. The questions were carefully drafted to allow maximum engagement with a range of 'disagree to agree', and a free text box to allow any comments that members of the public wished to make. This allowed for all comments and queries to be properly captured and promoted an open and qualitative approach to answering the questions.

2.6. The survey was supported by significant engagement activity such as:

- Focus group discussions with members of the Norfolk Residents' Panel, a virtual group consisting of nearly two thousand participants
- 18 drop-in events at locations spread across the whole of Norfolk, to share the proposals with residents and local businesses
- Engagement events with partner organisations and other local authorities
- A series of business events with large employers, anchor institutions and representative organisations for small and medium sized enterprises
- Engagement events with representative groups such as Youth Parliament
- Elected Member briefings
- Staff briefings

- Information shared through media, social media, online brochures
- Dedicated email address for any stakeholder to ask questions, request information or provide feedback

2.7. The Council also sought to ensure that residents and stakeholders could choose to participate via their preferred route, so additional non-digital routes such as paper copies of the survey were also publicly available via venues such as libraries and community hubs, returnable to a Freepost address. All information was made available in accessible formats and different languages on request, and written responses and letters were captured. Full details of the Deal and frequently asked questions were included on the consultation hub and every effort was made to answer queries as the consultation progressed.

2.8. As a member of the Consultation Institute, the Council drew on the Institute's expertise and independence and commissioned an independent analysis of all consultation responses and feedback received via the survey, as well as written submissions in the form of letters or emails received from stakeholders and members of the public.

3. Headline responses to the public consultation

3.1. The full report by the Consultation Institute is appended (See Appendix 1)

3.2. The consultation asked for views on the seven areas of our Deal, through a mix of closed and open questions. A total of 1,211 responses were received to the online survey, including hard copy input manually.

3.3. The questions in the survey included:

- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal for Norfolk to have control of money devolved from the Government?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed change to create a stronger local business voice for Norfolk?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to move the Adult Education Budget from Government to Norfolk County Council?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree with plans to open-up housing and employment sites in Norfolk?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree with proposals for an integrated transport settlement?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree with plans for an elected leader and cabinet system of governance?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the principles of devolution and the benefits it brings to Norfolk?

- 3.4. All questions in the survey had a majority of “agree” (consisting of the total of “strongly agree” and “agree”) over those who “disagreed” and “strongly disagreed”, as well as over those who “didn’t know” or “neither agreed or disagreed”.
- 3.5. The question with the highest majority of “agree” was on integrated transport budgets, with 67% of respondents “agreeing”. The question with the highest majority of “disagree” (consisting of the total of “strongly disagree” and “disagree”) was on the directly elected leader with 31% of respondents “disagreeing”.
- 3.6. Analysis of submissions by stakeholder groups shows that:
- The business community (includes large employers such as Aviva, Norwich Research Park and the University of East Anglia as well as SMEs and representative bodies such as the Chamber of Commerce) is supportive of devolution and the proposed deal, and it is noted that the approval rate for the deal was higher among those respondents who represented or named their organisation.
 - Local authorities are broadly supportive of the principles of devolution, and express concern about governance arrangements and the role of local councils in decision making.
 - Statutory partners like the Integrated Care Board and representatives of the voluntary sector welcome devolution as containing funding which would help to address some of the wider determinants of health, such as housing, jobs, and access to more opportunities.

4. Next steps

- 4.1. The Council’s Cabinet will meet on 5 June 2023 to consider the consultation results, and decide whether to submit the report to Government, as the implementation of the Deal is also subject to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities being satisfied that the required statutory requirements have been met.
- 4.2. If all these requirements are met, Full Council will be asked in December 2023 whether they endorse the deal and support the move to an elected leader and cabinet system of governance.
- 4.3. If the County Council agrees to proceed, Parliament will decide, in spring 2024, whether to approve the 'statutory instrument' required to let the County Deal for Norfolk proceed.

5. Impact of the Proposal

- 5.1. The findings of the consultation and feedback from pre-scrutiny will be used to inform the Council’s Cabinet decision in June 2023 about whether to proceed with the county deal.
- 5.2. If Cabinet agree to process, the consultation results will be submitted to government as the next step of their county deal decision making process.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. Funding to Norfolk County Council as part of an agreed Deal includes capacity funding available to fund the set-up costs, governance costs and costs associated with delivering the commitments within the deal. On 22 February 2023, Council agreed to allocated £250,000 to support the mobilisation of the County Deal, including the costs of the public consultation and any additional resources required, prior to capacity funding becoming available in December 2023, if the County Deal is approved.

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1. **Staff:** There is currently a small project team, within existing staff resources, that have worked on the consultation and are continuing to work on the development of the County Deal.
- 7.2. **Property:** None at present
- 7.3. **IT:** None at present

8. Other Implications

- 8.1. **Legal Implications:** The consultation responses will form part of the consideration for the secretary of State on whether the statutory tests are met for the granting of additional powers
- 8.2. **Human Rights Implications:** None

9. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

- 9.1. A comprehensive range of evidence has been gathered and analysed, to enable the Council to develop a sound equality impact assessment about the likely impacts of the Deal on people with protected characteristics.
- 9.2. This has involved reviewing data about people and services that might be affected, contextual information and commissioned research about local areas and populations, and crucially, the findings of public consultation.
- 9.3. The public consultation was led by the Consultation Institute (tCI) to ensure impartiality.
- 9.4. The appended equality impact assessment identified that the Deal has the potential to significantly enhance access for disabled and older people in Norfolk - and equality of opportunity for people with other protected characteristics. (See Appendix 2).

10. Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):

- 10.1. No direct DPIA implications arising from this report

11. Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):

- 11.1. None

12. Sustainability implications (where appropriate):

- 12.1. There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report. The investment and powers within the proposed deal have the potential to drive significant environmental benefits.

13. Any Other Implications:

- 13.1. None

14. Risk Implications / Assessment

- 14.1. The primary risk is related to set up and implementation costs expended should the Deal not receive formal approval. If agreed, the Deal provides capacity funding to cover these costs. The risk is expected to diminish as council progresses through the Deal agreement process, but the risk is only eliminated upon the legislation being made and the Deal being agreed.

15. Select Committee Comments

- 15.1. N/A

16. Recommendations

- 16.1. Scrutiny committee is asked to
- Consider the County Deal consultation findings and to provide feedback and recommendations where appropriate.

17. Background Papers

- 17.1. [Norfolk Devolution Deal text](#)
17.2. [A Deal for Norfolk - report to Council Extraordinary Meeting 17 January 2023](#)
17.3. [A Devolution Deal for Norfolk - report to Cabinet Extraordinary Meeting 17 January 2023](#)

Officer Contact

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If you need this report in large print, audio, braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.



County Deals Consultation Findings Report, 27 April 2023

1. BACKGROUND

On 8 December 2022 Norfolk County Council (NCC) and the Government agreed, in principle, a new County Deal for Norfolk designed to transfer funding and powers to Norfolk - a process known as devolution. Under a Deal, Norfolk would receive a £20 million investment fund, every year for 30 years.

On 17 January 2023 our Councillors agreed to progress the County Deal and a six-week public consultation was launched on 6 February, closing on 20 March 2023 and sought views from residents and key stakeholders across Norfolk. We invited their comments about the Deal which provides opportunity to unlock significant funding and for decisions currently made in Whitehall to be made in Norfolk, by Norfolk.

In particular, the consultation asked for views on the seven areas of our Deal, namely:

- Target funding and resources to Norfolk's own priorities
- Give Norfolk a stronger business voice
- Invest in the skills we know we need
- Open-up housing and employment sites
- Invest in local transport planning and consolidate transport budgets
- Have a Council Leader who is directly elected by the public, with the first election in May 2024
- Raise our profile nationally, enabling our voice to be heard by Government and help shape future policies

2. METHODOLOGY

Our consultation was developed and supported by a range of marketing materials designed to explain the key elements of our Deal. The consultation was made available for six weeks via the County Council's Citizen Space consultation hub. Paper copies, large print copies and Easy Read copies were available to download from the online portal, and available on request by email and phone (with a Freepost returns process in place). We also created videos including one in British Sign Language outlining the Deal and how residents were able to feedback to us. These videos were posted on our consultation hub and our website.

3. PROMOTION

To ensure we reached out to as many residents and stakeholders as possible the County Deal consultation was promoted through the following written, digital and face to face channels:

- Press releases to all media partners/channels across Norfolk
- Social media promotion on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, NextDoor, Instagram
- Drop-in events throughout Norfolk
- Members briefing to all NCC councillors
- NCC Managers Briefing and Information on the staff intranet and staff newsletters and the Leaders blog, plus staff lock screen and myNet banner
- Information on the Council's website www.norfolk.gov.uk
- Email briefing to stakeholders including Hard to Reach groups via our Equalities team and 520 parish councils
- Parish Council Webinars
- Voluntary Sector Briefing
- Business Events
- Norfolk Residents' Panel feedback session
- Norfolk Youth Parliament Briefings

The key areas of promotion are described in detail below:

3.1 Press releases

Media releases were issued to announce the start of consultation, the staging of drop-in events and a reminder to take part before consultation closed.

Media coverage was obtained on key media channels and their associated websites, including the EDP, Lynn News, BBC Online, BBC Radio Norfolk and Greatest Hits Radio, throughout the consultation period.

Council leader Councillor Andrew Proctor was interviewed by BBC Radio Norfolk, publicising the consultation, explaining the potential benefits of the Deal and addressing the main criticisms received so far.

The media also reported on views of district councils and county council opposition groups and included a reference that the consultation was taking place.

3.2 Social Media

There were regular social media posts on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn some of which linked to short videos from the council leader, head of paid service and executive director of strategy and transformation. The number of organic posts, reach and online interactions are tabled below:

Platform	Posts	Reach	Engagement (link clicks)
Facebook	18	77,215	13,299
Twitter	17	25,020	371
Nextdoor	17	83,551	N/A

We also placed 15 Facebook and Instagram advertisements throughout the consultation period sign posting people to our drop-in events; these advertisements reached out to 188,902 readers and enabled 4,782 link clicks.

As well as digital advertising we purchased 7 print media advertisements with Archant local newspapers – all advertisements were designed to promote our consultation and encourage residents and stakeholders to attend our drop-in events and feedback to our consultation.

3.3 Drop-in events

We held a series of drop-in events to share the proposals relating to Norfolk's County Deal with residents and local businesses. These events were held in numerous locations across the county, to ensure they were accessible to residents, representatives from local businesses and organisations.

During these events, residents and representatives from community groups could speak to Council representatives about our County Deal to find out more, complete a paper version of the consultation or take a paper copy home with them (to be returned via our Freepost address). Our prospectus and A5 flyers were also made available – this literature included QR codes for scanning taking the reader directly to our online consultation.

3.4 Members and staff briefings

A written briefing about our consultation plus the prospectus titled *Unlock Norfolk's Potential* was issued to all Members. They were invited to share details of the consultation with residents and attend our drop-in events scheduled throughout Norfolk during the consultation period. We invited staff to feedback to our consultation via our Leader Blog, Manager Briefing and staff newsletter. A computer lock screen and banner on the staff intranet reminded colleagues to participate in the consultation. Prior to the consultation senior officers also delivered briefings for the Member of each District Council

3.5 Parish Council Webinars

We partnered with the Norfolk Association of Local Councils to invite parish councils to two webinars on the 9th and 14th March. Our Head of Paid Services and Director of Strategy gave short presentations and answered questions about what type of person would make an elected leader for Norfolk and how decisions will be made about funding should we go ahead with the Deal. Representatives from 40 parish councils attended both events and we also wrote directly to all 520 parish councils inviting them to respond to our consultation.

3.6 Voluntary Norfolk Briefings

Written and verbal briefings were shared with Voluntary Norfolk which provides support to some 3,500 charities in Norfolk. Our consultation featured in their February newsletter, was shared via their networks and social media platforms. A briefing meeting was held with their Leaders Voice Network in March and Voluntary Norfolk has requested further meetings and involvement should the Deal proceed.

3.7 Business Events

Officers from our Economic Development team attended several business events to engage with local businesses, highlight the consultation and encourage feedback. The events allowed us to meet with a wide and varied range of local businesses from across Norfolk and included a mix of informal networking, more formal talks and question and answer sessions.

These events included the Big Debate hosted by the Chamber of Commerce, an investor event 'Enterprise Wednesday' at Norwich Research Park, which was well attended by several local businesses based at the Research Park; the Norfolk Developers' Conference, the eastern region's largest tech conference which hosted a variety of technical and development businesses from across the county; and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) integration business meals at both City College, Norwich, and College of West Anglia, Kings Lynn.

Other events also included Great Yarmouth's Operations and Maintenance Campus launch event in partnership with the LEP, which saw attendance from several offshore and energy businesses from the local area and Norfolk Chamber of Commerce's Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) roadshow. This event was well attended by local businesses from all industries who met to discuss the needs of employers and their workforces. We distributed a series of marketing collateral. This collateral included flyers, business cards and banners which all clearly outlined opportunities for businesses to take part in the County Deal consultation and encouraged feedback. All collateral included tailored business-focused key messages and links to our website.

3.8 Norfolk Youth Parliament Meeting

On 22 February, officers from Children's Services met with Norfolk Youth Parliament (NYP) members to discuss our County Deal. Their members told us they supported the idea of having a directly elected lead of Norfolk County Council and they were supportive of the Deal as it could open more opportunities for Norfolk. They also told us they would like to see the money being spent on children and young people to show that the Council would invest in the future of young people. Also, NYP members wanted to see more money spent on spaces and universal services for young people including better health provision. They highlighted they would like to see better transport links in the county to help young people become more independent, especially for those in rural areas. They also wanted to see environmental policies made a priority and rejuvenation of city and town centres.

3.9 Norfolk Residents Panel Feedback Session

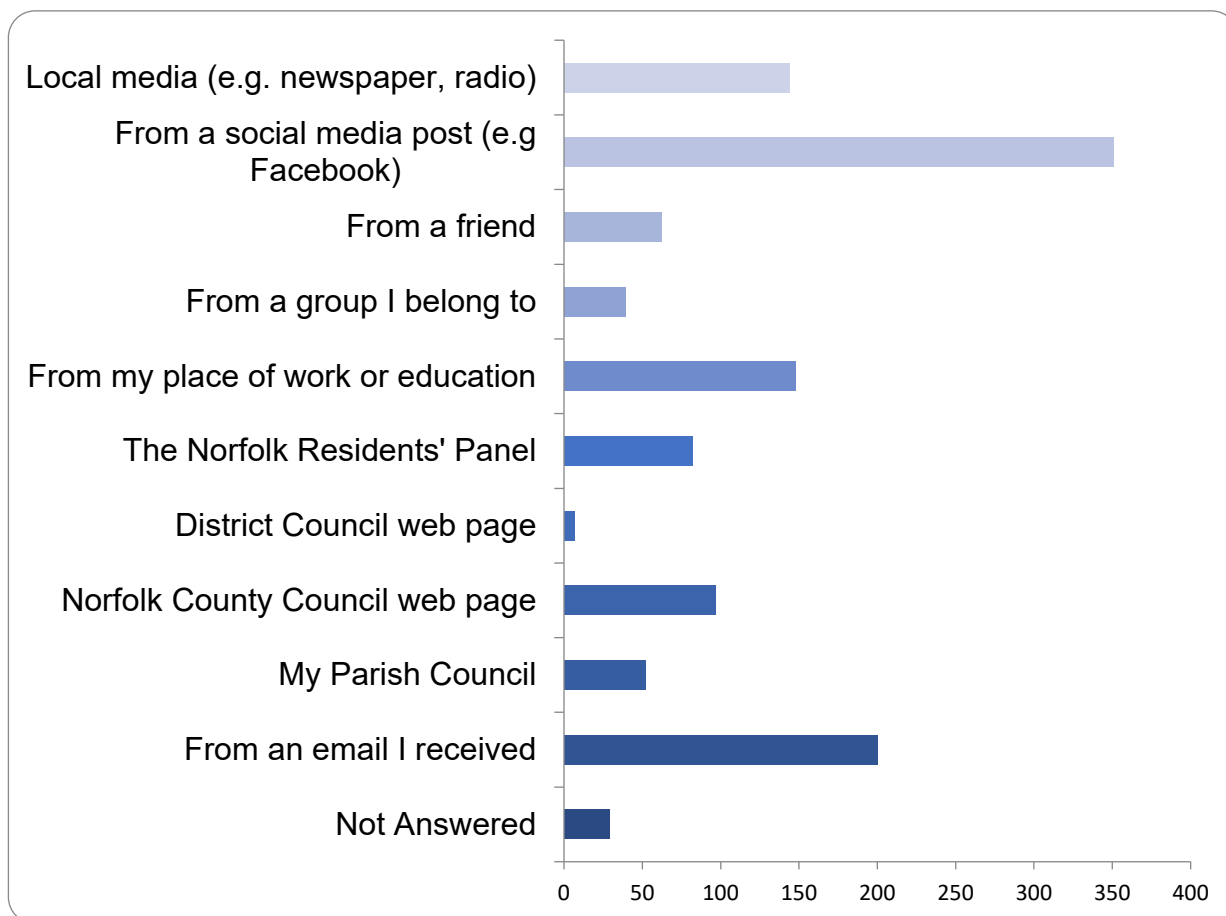
On the 15 March, the Leader of Norfolk County Council hosted an online feedback session with members of the Norfolk Residents' Panel. This included a short presentation about key areas of our Deal followed by questions and answers. Most of the questions were about the directly elected leader with many people wanting to know what type of person would put themselves forward for the position and whether he or she would be political or from the business world.

3.10 Norfolk D/deaf Community Video and Feedback Session

During the consultation, a request was received for information about the County Deal to be produced in British Sign Language (BSL). Norfolk County Council produced a video explaining the County Deal and how to get involved in the consultation in BSL.

The video was shared with D/deaf charities and organisations in Norfolk, as well as being uploaded to the County Deal consultation page. A screening of the video was organised at Dereham Deaf Social Club's monthly meeting, feedback from the group was submitted to the HaveYourSay email address and was analysed by the Consultation Institute.

We asked respondents how they heard about this consultation and the response is tabled below.



Option	Total	Percent
Local media (e.g., newspaper, radio)	144	11.89%
From a social media post (e.g., Facebook)	351	28.98%
From a friend	62	5.12%
From a group I belong to	39	3.22%
From my place of work or education	148	12.22%
The Norfolk Residents' Panel	82	6.77%
District Council web page	7	0.58%
Norfolk County Council web page	97	8.01%
My Parish Council	52	4.29%
From an email I received	200	16.52%
Not Answered	29	2.39%

4. SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

This section provides a summary of the survey analysis report produced independently by the Consultation Institute (tCI). Norfolk County Council commissioned tCI to analyse the open and closed question responses received to their online survey as part of the consultation on County Deal devolution arrangements for Norfolk.

The remainder of this section is set out in the following manner:

- An executive summary of the overall findings
- Details of the response rates and survey methodology
- Detail of the responses to the closed and open questions for each of the seven key areas of the Deal.

4.1 Executive Summary

When considering the proposal to **devolve financial control to Norfolk**:

- The majority (64%¹) agreed (28% strongly agree, 36% agree)
- Around a quarter (24%) disagreed (8% disagree, 16% strongly disagree)
- Approximately one tenth (9%) neither agreed nor disagreed
- A small number (2%) did not know
- The remainder (1%) chose not to provide an answer

The broad themes in **support** of the proposal were:

- **The use of local intelligence leading to enhanced efficiency:** an opportunity to use intelligence rooted in an in-depth understanding of the local context to improve efficiency of local spending for the benefit of Norfolk
- **Investing in Norfolk's future:** the potential investment to support Norfolk's overall sustainability providing flexibility for local leaders to make their own investment decisions rather than following Whitehall directives.
- **Enhanced local democratic structures:** the potential for local people to have a direct involvement in decisions through a directly elected leader in the county, resulting in enhanced accountability.
- **Cautious acceptance in recognition of potential inefficiencies:** There is a concern even among those supporting the proposal about additional bureaucracy and cost

The broad themes in **opposition** to the proposal were:

- **Norfolk County Council not best placed to deliver the Deal:** recurring reference to a perceived failings in the County Council, with many remarking on a poor track record of performance, coupled with concerns over the creation of more layers of bureaucracy.

¹ All percentages are calculated against a base of 1,211 respondents.

- **Reservations concerning the overall financial settlement offered in the Deal:** the proposed **finance** seem large but the reality will not be enough to achieve anything significant for Norfolk nor are the **futureproofed** with no account made of inflation.
- **A reduction in democratic accountability:** an increasing lack of trust in **politics** in general made people less inclined to support the Deal.
- **A move towards local priorities at the expense of other areas in the County:** Respondents felt that the **local** nature of the proposed arrangements could lead to favouritism in decision making, and a focus on urban areas at the expense of other areas.
- **Perceptions of bias towards positive decisions in the consultation:** leading questions were used and lack of 'downside' explanations (potential disadvantages or risks) would inevitably lead to supportive answers.

The broad themes from those **unsure** whether to support or oppose:

- **Concerns over current delivery and future transparency:** concerns over the perceived effectiveness of the county council current track record and whether it can be trusted with new duties.
- **Is the potential investment in Norfolk's future sufficient to justify accepting the Deal:** the **finance** settlement contained in the Deal may not be enough to achieve any significant change for Norfolk nor was it **futureproofed** for the impact of inflation.
- **The potential of becoming entangled in politics and bureaucracy:** Respondents were wary around the implications of **politics** in the Deal, specifically the perceived negative impact of increased politicisation of decision making and additional bureaucracy.
- **The consultation itself:** a perceived bias in the consultation questions were reported as a reason for uncertainty over whether to support or oppose the proposal
- **The need to demonstrate local intelligence not fully met:** unconvinced the Deal reflected an intelligence based full understanding of the local context, landscape and democratic structures.

When considering the proposal to create a **stronger local business voice** for Norfolk

- The majority (60%) agreed with the proposal (25% strongly agree and 35% agree)
- Around a quarter (23%) disagreed (13% strongly disagree and 10% disagree)
- Just over a tenth (14%) were unsure (neither agree nor disagree)
- A small number (2%) did not know
- The remainder (1%) did not answer the question.

Reasons for agreeing:

- **The opportunity to provide voice for local Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) businesses in decisions:** providing the opportunity for local SME businesses to have a direct say in those support arrangements and to have a voice in decisions.
- **The opportunity for enhanced accountability and coordination:** the opportunity for local businesses to have a direct say in the business support arrangements overcoming perceptions reduced accountability in the current arrangements.
- **Providing a clear local focus of business support:** The proposal provides a clear focus on the county of **Norfolk** without distraction from Suffolk which has a different economic/entrepreneurial make-up.
- **Providing extra resource for business support in Norfolk:** the proposal will go some but not all the way to address the situation where current resources are insufficient to address the business support needs for the county.
- **A recognition that the current business support arrangements could be better:** while the current LEP works and the current arrangements can be further built.

Reasons for disagreeing:

- **Change seems needless and lacking adequate financial support:** the proposal seen as a **waste** of resources when the current **LEP works** and the arrangements are successful.
- **The proposed arrangements reduce accountability and independence:** removing the **independence** of the current arrangements in which the non-politicised decision-making of the LEP is seen as a significant disbenefit to the county.
- **Focusing business support solely on Norfolk ignores the wider regional and national opportunities:** Norfolk is too small an area to deal effectively with issues currently dealt with on a wider scale.
- **Overlooking the benefits of local coordination:** The proposal appears to overlook both the opportunity for coordination of the needs of business with the needs of other service areas.
- **Consultation:** reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions.

Reasons unsure:

- **Change seems needless with the potential to reduce accountability:** the proposal reduces/removes accountability are seen as a **waste** of resources.
- **Not convinced business interests are being fully considered:** The proposals do not clearly set out the way in which the direction of business support by **local**

agencies understanding the **local** context is to be met and **coordinate** the needs of business with the needs of other service areas.

- **Focusing business support solely on Norfolk ignores the wider regional and national opportunities:** Norfolk is **too small** an area to deal effectively with issues currently dealt with on a wider scale.
- **Consultation:** Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions.

When considering the proposal to move **control of Adult Education** to Norfolk County Council:

- The majority (65%) agreed with the proposal (33% strongly agreed and 32% agreed)
- Less than a quarter (21%) disagreed (12% strongly disagreed 9% disagreed)
- Just under 12% were unsure
- 1% did not know
- The remainder (1%) did not answer.

Reasons for agreeing:

- **Local intelligence leading to improved delivery:** the potential to base delivery on understanding of the unique context, landscape and democratic structures grounded in local intelligence of what is required.
- **Resources on offer:** brings in resources to deliver adult education that would otherwise not have been available.
- **Future performance based on the past:** Norfolk has a strong track record of delivering effective adult education in the past leading to confidence in the potential to deliver.

Reasons for disagreeing:

- **Poor performance and overlooking local intelligence:** Concerns over the effectiveness of the county council's **current track record** and the extent to which it can be trusted with new responsibilities.
- **Inadequate resources on offer:** concern that the financial resources on offer in the Deal were inadequate to meet the overall adult education needs of Norfolk.
- **Consultation concerns:** concern over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions.

Reasons unsure:

- **Poor performance and overlooking local intelligence:** a lack of clarity of the effectiveness of the county council's **current track record** and the extent to which it can be trusted with new responsibilities.
- **Inadequate resources on offer:** concern that the financial resources on offer in the Deal might be inadequate to meet the overall adult education needs of Norfolk.

When considering the proposal to **open up housing and employment sites** in Norfolk:

- The majority (55%) agreed with the proposal (24% strongly agree and 31% agree)
- Just over a quarter (27%) disagreed (17% strongly disagree and 10% disagree)
- 15% were unsure (neither agree nor disagree)
- 2% did not know
- The remainder (1%) did not provide a response.

Reasons for agreeing:

- **Development to address need:** meets the requirement to provide affordable housing for all to meet the county's needs, addressing concern about the need to control housing to prevent an increase second home ownership rather than for those who need it most, particularly in respect of new developments.
- **Ensuring development protects the Norfolk environment:** The proposal was viewed favourably due to the approach of using existing/brownfield sites in built up areas rather than open countryside; protecting agricultural land from development; and the use of suitable sites to protect the local environment.
- **Local intelligence leading to appropriate development:** a focus on local needs based on understanding of the local context and an **intelligence-led** approach based on local knowledge about the specifics of the area.
- **Additional resources:** brings in additional resources to Norfolk despite concerns over the ability of the resources in the Deal to meet development targets.

Reasons for disagreeing:

- **Potential failure to consider Norfolk's future sustainability:** concerns that the proposal failed to take account of the overall need to use **brownfield** sites, particularly in existing urban settings leading to housing and employment sites that are not **suitable**.
- **Affordable before second homes:** Concern that the proposal lacked focus on affordable housing for local people and failed to address the issues of second homes.
- **Potential failure to meet local need:** Concern was expressed over a lack of focus on understanding of the local context leading to development that fails to meet identifiable need.
- **Excessive centralisation leading to the loss of local context and understanding:** the potential centralisation of all planning authority roles within the County Council removing local knowledge held by District Councils.
- **Inadequate resources:** The resources in the proposed financial settlement were not felt to be sufficient to meet the development targets in the Deal.

Reasons unsure:

- **Remain to be convinced about environmental considerations:** unsure if the proposal had fully addressed concerns around prioritisation of the use of brownfield over agricultural, so ensuring suitable development including concerns over adequate sustainable infrastructure.
- **Intelligence led provision to meet local need:**
The lack of detail around the use of **local intelligence** to develop housing and employment sites that met local **need** including a focus on **affordable** housing caused respondents to remain unsure about the proposal (67 comments in total).
- **Uncertainty over the funding settlement:** unsure if the resources in the settlement would enable delivery of the development targets associated with the Deal.
- **Uncertainty over the consultation:** reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions.

When considering the proposal for an **integrated transport settlement**:

- The majority (66%) agreed with the proposal (37% strongly agree, 29% agree)
- Just under a fifth (19%) disagreed (12% strongly disagreed, 7% disagree)
- Just over a tenth (13%) were unsure (neither agree nor disagree)
- A small number (1%) provided a response indicating they did not know
- The remainder (1%) did not answer.

Reasons for agreeing: In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in support of the proposal were:

- **An opportunity to improve public transport:** enhancing the public transport offer in the county as a key benefit of the Deal, particularly in the opportunity to increase bus efficiency.
Adopting an evidence-led approach to developing an enhanced transport offer: underpinned by the opportunity for action after experiencing stagnation/decay in the county's transport infrastructure, new approaches such as enhanced contract management directed by local intelligence were seen as a key benefit.
- **Adopting an environmentally friendly approach to transport:** consideration of active transport, car sharing and alternative approaches to transport and developing a net zero /low carbon transport infrastructure to address adverse environmental issues were seen as positives of the proposal.
- **New road building:** The opportunity to meet the perceived need for new road building.
- **An opportunity to enhance transport connectivity for all:** increase transport connectivity across the county to link key service areas such as employment and tourism with a focus on improving links to/within rural areas

Reasons for disagreeing:

- **No faith anything will result from the proposal:** any **action** proposed was unlikely to materialise and the required skills to adopt a new approach in the county did not exist.
- **Public transport is broken beyond fixing:** view that **public transport** is beyond fixing and respondents are not convinced proposal will make any difference to **bus efficiency**.
- **Too little, too late:** The resources offered within the proposal are not enough to reverse the decline in road investment and overall the funds are too little to achieve anything of note.
- **Achieving net zero:** Norfolk is focused on the car not on net zero. Additionally, the infrastructure is not in place to support a switch to electric or walking/cycling to provide **alternatives**, and the required powers to achieve this are only available to a combined authority.
- **Consultation:** Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions.
- **Rural transport improvements:** Reservations exist that any transport improvements in the Deal will reach beyond towns and cities into rural communities.

Reasons unsure:

- **A desire to see a focus on delivery:** concerns that the **resources** on offer were not enough to address the needs of Norfolk, including the need to be convinced adequate funds are available and there is the opportunity to bring **public transport** back into public ownership.
- **Addressing transport needs for all:** a need to be convinced bus efficiency will address the needs of all people in towns, cities and rural settings. Above all ensuring transport improvements meet the needs of people in rural areas
- **Addressing net zero:** disappointment with the lack of ambition for sustainable transport and other alternatives.
- **Consultation:** Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions.

When considering the proposal for an **elected leader and cabinet system of governance**:

- Half (50%) agreed with the proposal (24% strongly agree and 26% agree)
- Just under a third (31%) disagreed (23% strongly disagree, 8% disagree)
- Just under a fifth (17%) were unsure (neither agree nor disagree)
- 1% did not know
- The remainder (1%) did not provide an answer.

Reasons for agreeing: In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in support of the proposal were:

- **Enhanced local democratic structures:** provides the potential for local people to have a direct involvement in decisions through a directly elected leader in the county, resulting in enhanced democratic, accountability.
- **A focus on Norfolk:** the potential to overcome any perceived negative impact of the increased politics in decision-making by having an elected leader focused on the benefits for Norfolk.
- **A revised approach to strategy for Norfolk:** an opportunity to think in a more strategic way.
- **Positive experience from elsewhere:** Perceived success/failure of other elected mayors/leaders.
- **Inefficiency:** concerns over potential increases in bureaucracy and added layers of decision making.
- **Centralisation:** Removing important links to local communities through district councils by an increased centralisation of functions under the proposed Deal.
- **Consultation:** Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions.

Reasons for disagreeing:

- **Reduced accountability, local connections and trust:** the potential to remove democratic accountability through a perceived removal of the process of dialogue and associated checks and balances.
- **Negative experience from elsewhere:** Respondents opposed the deal based on their own negative experiences or views of the performance of other mayors elsewhere in the country and the Police and Crime Commissioner locally
- **Consultation:** Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions.

Reasons unsure:

- **The need to demonstrate transparent and accountable processes:** The politics of the arrangements were a cause of confusion, particularly if the leader is from an opposition party to the majority and how this would be managed.
- **An efficient and democratically accountable leader's office:** The potential for being seen as **undemocratic** must be countered alongside a move away for potential **inefficiency** through duplication of function in the leader's office.
- **Consultation:** Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the **consultation** questions
- **Resources:** Reassurance sought that the resources in the settlement are adequate and futureproofed.

When considering the extent to which people agree or disagree with the **principles of devolution**:

- The majority (57%) agreed with the proposal (25% strongly agree, 32% agree)
- Just under a quarter (24%) disagreed (16% strongly disagree, 8% disagree)
- 15% were unsure (neither agree nor disagree)
- 2% did not know
- The remainder (2%) did not provide an answer

Reasons for agreeing:

- **Enhanced accountability based on local understanding:** allowing for enhanced **accountability** and lobbying in the interests of the county based on **intelligence** rooted in local knowledge about the specifics of the area underpinned by understanding of context, history and geography.
- **Pragmatic acceptance of conditions for enhance national visibility:** the terms of the Deal, while not entirely suitable/acceptable are accepted to achieve a potentially enhanced national voice for the county at Westminster.
- **Acceptance of the principles to access resources otherwise unavailable:** the county will be better off in terms of additional funds and self-determination, although the resources are recognised as not being very large.

Reasons for disagreeing:

- **Failing to achieve any gains through added bureaucracy:** concern over the potential for inefficiency by introducing increased bureaucracy and added layers of decision.
- **Potentially difficult conditions:** The terms associated with the Deal have the potential to be unacceptable, with the impact of politics felt to be potentially of significant negative impact in the future.
- **The financial settlement is not worthwhile:** The funds were not felt to be enough to compensate for the additional responsibilities given to Norfolk under the Deal and in the long run the county would be worse off.
- **Loss of democratic accountability through the election of a leader:** Concern was expressed about the loss of democratic accountability through concentration of power in the hands of one person in the shape of the elected leader.
- **Consultation:** Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions.

Reasons unsure:

- **Potentially difficult conditions:** The terms associated with the Deal have the potential to be unacceptable, with the impact of politics felt to be potentially of significant negative impact in the future.

- **Failing to achieve any gains through added bureaucracy:** Significant concern was expressed over the potential for inefficiency by introducing increased bureaucracy and added layers of decision-making.
- **Futureproofing governance:** Concern over the extent to which the Deal provides for the opportunity for local people to have a direct involvement in decisions through local democratic arrangements making the leader accountable once the agreement is made with Government.
- **Is the Deal worth it:** Reservations over the extent to which the resources offered under the Deal are sufficient to deliver the additional devolved responsibilities and will the funds continue to be available in the future; 30 years is a long time.
- **Consultation:** Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions.
- **Intelligence:** Direction of activity and allocations based on local knowledge about the specifics of the area.

NB: Full detail of the analysis of responses, including the number of people who responded, detail of the individual codes used to develop the themes completed by the Consultation Institute (tCI) can be found in **Annex One**.

4.2 Response rates

A total of 1,211 responses were received to the online survey, including hard copy input manually. Of these responses:

- 60 were received from respondents identifying as groups, organisations or businesses.
- 61 were received from respondents who mentioned the organisation they worked for or represented.
- The remainder, and overwhelming majority (1,090) were from individuals.

4.3 Survey format

Respondents had the opportunity to make submissions to the online survey in two formats:

1. **Closed questions** – respondents were asked to rate each of the proposals in the Deal using a fixed scale from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’.
2. **Open questions:** alongside rating the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the proposals, the online survey provided an opportunity for a ‘free text’ response (‘why do you say that?’).

4.4 Analysis

The analysis of the response was conducted using the following approaches:

- **Closed questions:**
 - Reporting is based on providing both number of respondents to each question and their percentage against the total response. Where

percentages are used, totals may not necessarily add up to 100% because of rounding or instances where multiple responses are allowed to the same question (i.e. 'tick all that apply').

- The number of respondents (base) for each question varies due to individual choice regarding questions answered.
- **Open questions:**
 - Each comment was assigned a code to capture its content and the sentiment expressed. These codes have been combined into overall themes for reporting.
 - This analysis was conducted using the 'tagging' facility in Norfolk County Council's online platform (Citizen Space). This involves the analysts reading through all the responses and developing codes to represent the core sentiment expressed in a group of comments. These codes are then added to the Citizen Space system using a facility known as 'Tags' which can then be used to mark all similar comments.
 - These individual codes (tags) have been combined to form themes which are reported throughout. Within these themes we have included the direct reference to the key word or words that describes the code and highlighted these in bold text.

4.5 Survey structure and analysis

The online survey asked questions related to the seven key areas of the Deal and the analyses against each of these questions is set out in turn in the following sections.

4.6 Local control of money devolved from Government

Respondents were asked to provide their response to the question:

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

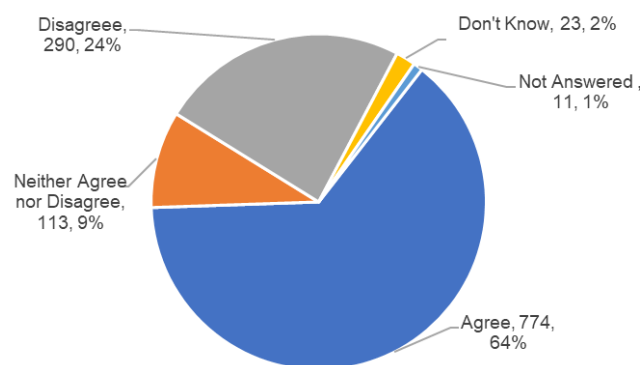
4.6.1 Quantitative (closed) responses

Respondents provided their response against a closed rating scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree.

When the results were analysed, respondents were largely in agreement with the proposal as seen below:

- The majority (64%) agreed (28% strongly agree, 36% agree)
- Around a quarter (24%) disagreed (8% disagree, 16% strongly disagree)
- Approximately one tenth (9%) neither agreed nor disagreed
- A small number (2%) did not know
- The remainder (1%) chose not to provide an answer

Response	No.	%
Agree	774	64%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	113	9%
Disagree	290	24%
Don't Know	23	2%
Not Answered	11	1%
Total	1,211	100%



4.6.2 Qualitative (open) responses

Responses to the prompt “**Why do you say that?**” were analysed and grouped thematically around reasons for support, opposition or being unsure, as shown below.

Reasons for agreeing: In descending order, the broad themes in support of the proposal were:

- Local intelligence leading to enhanced efficiency:**
 Respondents saw the Deal as an opportunity to use **intelligence** rooted in an in-depth understanding of the **local** context to improve **efficiency** of local spending for the benefit of Norfolk (501 comments in total).
- Investing in Norfolk’s future:**
 Respondents were supportive based on the potential for the Deal to provide **investment** to support Norfolk’s overall sustainability helping to **futureproof** through the direct control of local expenditure. This is supported by recognition that while the **finance** settlement is relatively small it is in line with other areas and will provide flexibility for local leaders to make their own investment decisions rather than following Whitehall directives (121 comments in total).
- Enhanced local democratic structures:**
 The proposed Deal provides the potential for local people to have a direct involvement in decisions through a directly elected leader in the county, resulting in enhanced accountability. It is hoped that this will lead to increased accountability although it is recognised that there will inevitably be some form of trade-off between local priorities and national direction resulting from the inevitability of **politics** in the process (116 comments in total).
- Cautious acceptance in recognition of potential inefficiencies:**
 There is a concern even among those supporting the proposal about additional bureaucracy and cost and associated **inefficiency** (18 comments in total).

Reasons for disagreeing: In descending order, the most frequently mentioned broad themes in opposition to the proposal were:

- **Norfolk County Council not best placed to deliver the Deal and inefficiency:**

There was a recurring reference to a perceived failings in the County Council, with many remarking on a poor track record of performance. This was coupled with a concern that the proposal would create more layers of bureaucracy resulting in duplication and inefficiency (155 comments in total).

- **Reservations concerning the overall financial settlement offered in the Deal:**

Respondents expressed the view that the proposed **finance** in the Deal seem large but the reality will not be enough to achieve anything significant for Norfolk. The proposed finances in the Deal are not **futureproofed** with no account made of inflation. Overall, the proposed **investment** in the Deal was not felt to be worth it in terms of the money attracted to Norfolk (86 comments in total).

- **A reduction in democratic accountability:**

Respondents reported that an increasing lack of trust in **politics** in general made them less inclined to support the Deal. This made them reluctant to move away from accountability through national Government structures to devolved decision-making (58 comments in total).

- **A move towards local priorities at the expense of other areas in the County:**

Respondents felt that the **local** nature of the proposed arrangements could lead to favouritism in decision making. There were additional concerns that there would also be a focus on urban areas with decisions being '**too Norwich**' at the expense of other areas (28 comments in total).

- **Perceptions of bias towards positive decisions in the consultation:**

Concern was expressed about perceptions of bias in the consultation, with the view that leading questions were used and lack of 'downside' explanations (potential disadvantages or risks) would inevitably lead to supportive answers (15 comments).

Reasons unsure: In descending order of mentions, the broad themes from those respondents who were unsure whether to support or oppose the proposal were:

- **Concerns over current delivery and future transparency:**

Respondents reported concerns over the perceived effectiveness of the county council current track **record** and whether it can be trusted with new duties. Lack of trust that NCC can deliver, with a need for **transparency** in decision-making to reassure respondents (38 comments in total).

- **Is the potential investment in Norfolk's future sufficient to justify accepting the Deal:**

Respondents were concerned that the **finance** settlement contained in the Deal may not be enough to achieve any significant change for Norfolk,

alongside concerns that this was not **futureproofed** by not factoring in any consideration of the impact of inflation. However, respondents were open to persuasion around the opportunity for local **investment** (31 comments in total).

- **The potential of becoming entangled in politics and bureaucracy:**
Respondents were wary around the implications of **politics** in the Deal, specifically the perceived negative impact of increased politicisation of decision making. There were also concerns expressed around the potential to increase **inefficiency** through additional bureaucracy and layers of decision making which were seen as a diversion of resources (19 comments in total).
- **The consultation itself:**
Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the **consultation** questions were reported as a reason for uncertainty over whether to support or oppose the proposal (12 comments).
- **The need to demonstrate local intelligence not fully met:**
Respondents were not convinced the Deal reflected an **intelligence** based full understanding of the **local** context, land scape and democratic structures (9 comments in total).

4.7 Local Business Voice for Norfolk

Respondents were asked to provide their response to the question:

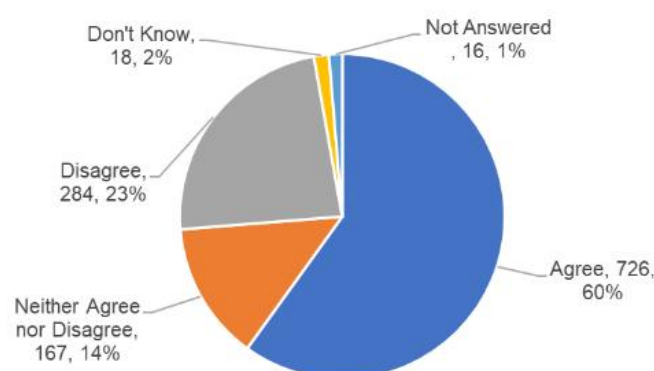
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed change to create a stronger local business voice for Norfolk?

4.7.1 Quantitative (Closed) Responses

Respondents provided their response against a closed rating scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree. When the results were analysed the majority of respondents were in agreement with the proposal as seen below:

- The majority (60%) agreed with the proposal (25% strongly agree and 35% agree)
- Around a quarter (23%) disagreed (13% strongly disagree and 10% disagree)
- Just over a tenth (14%) were unsure (neither agree nor disagree)
- A small number (2%) did not know
- The remainder (1%) did not answer the question.

Response	No.	%
Agree	726	60%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	167	14%
Disagree	284	23%
Don't Know	18	1%
Not Answered	16	1%
Total	1,211	100%²



4.7.1 Qualitative (open) responses

Responses to the prompt ***“Why do you say that?”*** were analysed and grouped thematically around reasons for support, opposition or being unsure, as shown below.

Reasons for agreeing: In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in support of the proposal were:

- **The opportunity to provide voice for local Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) businesses in decisions:**

Respondents saw the Deal as providing an opportunity for the direction of business support by agencies with an in-depth understanding of the **local** context. At the same time providing the opportunity for local **SME** businesses to have a direct say in those support arrangements and to have a voice in decisions (239 comments in total).

² Rounding has been applied

- **The opportunity for enhanced accountability and coordination:**
The Deal provides the opportunity for local businesses to have a direct say in the business support arrangements overcoming perceptions that the current situation reduce or remove **accountability**. Alongside this, the Deal provides the prospect of **coordination** of the needs of business with the needs of other service areas (122 comments in total).
- **Providing a clear local focus of business support:**
The proposal provides a clear focus on the county of **Norfolk** without distraction from Suffolk which has a different economic/entrepreneurial make-up while recognising the importance of **regional** working (57 comments in total).
- **Providing extra resource for business support in Norfolk:**
While it was accepted that existing resources are insufficient to address the business support needs for the county there were doubts that enough funding was being offered in the Deal to address this (18 comments).
- **A recognition that the current business support arrangements could be better:**
The view was that the **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) works** and, though the current arrangements are successful, they can be further built on under the Deal (8 comments).

Reasons for disagreeing: In descending order, the most frequently mentioned broad themes in opposition to the proposal were:

- **Change seems needless and lacking adequate financial support:**
Proposals seen as a **waste** of resources when the current **LEP works** and the arrangements are successful. Alongside this sat respondents' concerns over the extent to which resources being made available under the deal were sufficient to meet Norfolk's business support requirements (98 comments in total).
- **The proposed arrangements reduce accountability and independence:**
The proposals in the Deal appear to reduce/remove accountability. This was felt to be exacerbated by removing the **independence** of the current arrangements in which the non-politicised decision-making of the LEP is seen as a significant benefit to the county (84 comments in total).
- **Focusing business support solely on Norfolk ignores the wider regional and national opportunities:**
Norfolk is **too small** an area to deal effectively with issues currently dealt with on a wider scale. The proposal fails to recognise of the benefits of working at a wider geographic, **regional**, scale than Norfolk (37 comments in total).

- **Overlooking the benefits of local coordination:**

The proposal appears to overlook both the opportunity for coordination of the needs of business with the needs of other service areas and the direction of business support by local agencies with an in-depth understanding of the **local** context (18 comments in total).

- **Consultation:**

Respondents expressed reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (14 comments in total).

Reasons unsure: In descending order of mentions, the broad themes from those respondents who were unsure whether to support or oppose the proposal were:

- **Change seems needless with the potential to reduce accountability:**

The proposals in the Deal reduce/remove accountability (**no accountability**) and are seen as a **waste** of resources, reducing the perceived benefit of the **independence** in current arrangement through the non-politicised decision-making of the LEP (31 comments in total).

- **Not convinced business interests are being fully considered:**

The proposals do not clearly set out the way in which the direction of business support by **local** agencies understanding the **local** context is to be met and **coordinate** the needs of business with the needs of other service areas. Neither does it provide a convincing argument that **SMEs** will be heard and their needs met or the wider opportunity for local business to have a **voice** in decisions (21 comments in total).

- **Focusing business support solely on Norfolk ignores the wider regional and national opportunities:**

Norfolk is **too small** an area to deal effectively with issues currently dealt with on a wider scale. The proposal fails to recognise of the benefits of working at a wider geographic, **regional**, scale than Norfolk (21 comments in total).

- **Consultation:**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (9 comments).

4.8 Adult Education

4.8.1 Quantitative (closed) responses

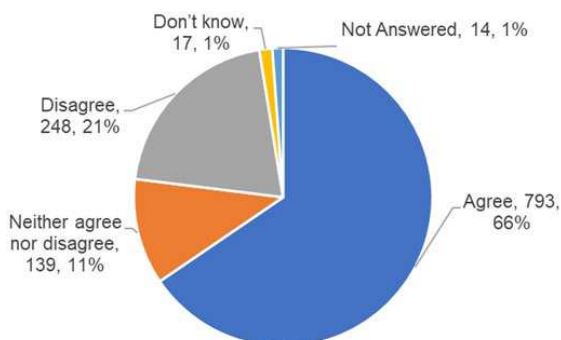
Respondents were asked to provide their response to the question:

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

Respondents provided their response against a closed rating scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree. When the results were analysed the majority of respondents were in agreement with the proposal as seen below:

- The majority (65%) agreed with the proposal (33% strongly agreed and 32% agreed)
- Less than a quarter (21%) disagreed (12% strongly disagreed 9% disagreed)
- Just under 12% were unsure
- 1% did not know
- The remainder (1%) did not answer.

Response	No.	%
Agree	793	65%
Neither agree nor disagree	139	11%
Disagree	248	21%
Don't know	17	1%
Not Answered	14	1%
Total	1,211	100%



4.8.2 Qualitative (open) responses

Reasons for agreeing: In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in support of the proposal were:

- **Local intelligence leading to improved delivery:**
The proposed Deal offers the potential to base delivery on understanding of the unique **local** context, landscape and democratic structures based on **intelligence** of what is required (317 comments in total).
- **Resources on offer:**
The proposal brings in resources to deliver adult education that would otherwise not have been available (52 comments in total).
- **Future performance based on the past:**
Norfolk has a strong track record of delivering effective adult education in the past leading to confidence in the potential to deliver the requirements of the Deal (37 comments in total).

Reasons for disagreeing: In descending order, the most frequently mentioned broad themes in opposition to the proposal were:

- **Poor performance and overlooking local intelligence:**
Concerns over the effectiveness of the county council's current track **record** and the extent to which it can be trusted with new responsibilities, coupled with the view that the proposal does not maximise local **intelligence** about what is required (104 comments in total).
- **Inadequate resources on offer:**
Respondents expressed concern that the financial **resources** on offer in the Deal were inadequate to meet the overall adult education needs of Norfolk (40 comments in total).

- **Consultation concerns:**

Respondents expressed concern over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (12 comments in total).

Reasons unsure: In descending order of mentions, the broad themes from those respondents who were unsure whether to support or oppose the proposal were:

- **Poor performance and overlooking local intelligence:**

Respondents were unsure whether to agree or disagree with the proposal as a result of a lack of clarity of the effectiveness of the county council's current track **record** and the extent to which it can be trusted with new responsibilities, coupled with the view that the proposal does not maximise local **intelligence** about what is required (44 comments in total).

- **Inadequate resources on offer:**

Respondents expressed concern that the financial **resources** on offer in the Deal might be inadequate to meet the overall adult education needs of Norfolk (17 comments in total).

4.9 Housing and employment

Respondents were asked to provide their response to the question:

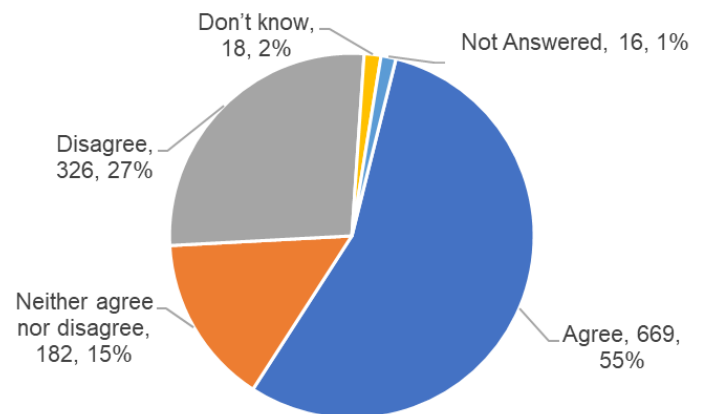
To what extent to do you agree or disagree with plans to open-up housing and employment sites in Norfolk?

4.9.1 Quantitative (closed) responses

Respondents provided their response against a closed rating scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree. When the results were analysed the majority of respondents were in agreement with the proposal as seen below:

- The majority (55%) agreed with the proposal (24% strongly agree and 31% agree)
- Just over a quarter (27%) disagreed (17% strongly disagree and 10% disagree)
- 15% were unsure (neither agree nor disagree)
- 2% did not know
- The remainder (1%) did not provide a response.

Response	No.	%
Agree	669	55%
Neither agree nor disagree	182	15%
Disagree	326	27%
Don't know	18	2%
Not Answered	16	1%
Total	1,211	100%



4.9.2 Qualitative (open) responses

Responses to the prompt “**Why do you say that?**” were analysed and grouped thematically around reasons for support, opposition or being unsure, as shown below.

Reasons for agreeing: In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in support of the proposal were:

- Development to address need:**
 The proposal was felt to meet the requirement to provide **affordable** housing for all to meet the county’s needs, addressing concern about the need to control housing to prevent an increase **second home** ownership rather than for those who need it most, particularly in respect of new developments. The Deal was also felt to provide the opportunity to develop all required **infrastructure** to meet identifiable **need** both in housing and employment sites (304 comments in total).
- Ensuring development protects the Norfolk environment:**
 The proposal was viewed favourably due to the approach of using existing/**brownfield** sites in built up areas rather than open countryside; protecting agricultural (**farm**) land from development; and the use of suitable sites to protect the local environment (175 comments in total).
- Local intelligence leading to appropriate development:**
 The proposal offers a focus on local needs based on understanding of the local context and an **intelligence**-led approach based on local knowledge about the specifics of the area (82 comments in total).
- Additional resources:**
 Recognition that the Deal brings in additional resources to Norfolk despite concerns over the ability of the resources in the Deal to meet development targets (18 comments).

Reasons for disagreeing: In descending order, the most frequently mentioned broad themes in opposition to the proposal were:

- **Potential failure to consider Norfolk's future sustainability:**
Respondents were concerned that the proposal failed to take account of the overall need to use **brownfield** sites, particularly in existing urban settings leading to housing and employment sites that are not **suitable**. This included concerns over the impact of lack of consideration of **infrastructure** demand on economic, social and environmental **sustainability** (115 comments in total).
- **Affordable before second homes:**
Concern that the proposal lacked focus on **affordable** housing for local people and failed to address the issues of **second homes** (69 comments in total).
- **Potential failure to meet local need:**
Concern was expressed over a lack of focus on **local** understanding of the local context leading to development that fails to meet identifiable **need(s)** (45 comments in total).
- **Excessive centralisation leading to the loss of local context and understanding:**
Concerns over the potential of **centralisation** of all planning authority roles within the County Council removing local knowledge held by District Councils (34 comments).
- **Inadequate resources:**
The **resources** in the proposed financial settlement were not felt to be sufficient to meet the development targets in the Deal (39 comments in total).

Reasons unsure: In descending order of mentions, the broad themes from those respondents who were unsure whether to support or oppose the proposal were:

- **Remain to be convinced about environmental considerations:**
Respondents were unsure if the proposal had fully addressed concerns around prioritisation of the use of **brownfield** over agricultural (**farm**) land, so ensuring **suitable** development including concerns over adequate sustainable **infrastructure** (100 comments in total).
- **Intelligence led provision to meet local need:**
The lack of detail around the use of **local intelligence** to develop housing and employment sites that met local **need** including a focus on **affordable** housing caused respondents to remain unsure about the proposal (67 comments in total).

- **Uncertainty over the funding settlement:**

Respondents were unsure if the resources in the settlement would enable delivery of the development targets associated with the Deal (16 comments).

- **Uncertainty over the consultation:**

Respondents expressed reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (11 comments).

4.10 Integrated transport

Respondents were asked to provide their response to the question:

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

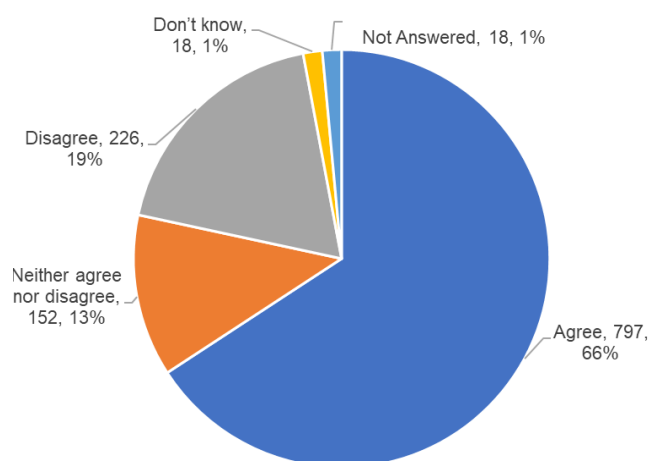
4.10.1 Quantitative (closed) responses

Respondents provided their response against a closed rating scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree.

When the results were analysed the majority of respondents were in agreement with the proposal as seen below:

- The majority (66%) agreed with the proposal (37% strongly agree, 29% agree)
- Just under a fifth (19%) disagreed (12% strongly disagreed, 7% disagree)
- Just over a tenth (13%) were unsure (neither agree nor disagree)
- A small number (1%) provided a response indicating they did not know
- The remainder (1%) did not answer.

Response	No.	%
Agree	797	66%
Neither agree nor disagree	152	13%
Disagree	226	19%
Don't know	18	1%
Not Answered	18	1%
Total	1,211	100%



4.10.2 Qualitative (open) responses

Responses to the prompt “**Why do you say that?**” were analysed and grouped thematically around reasons for support, opposition or being unsure, as shown below.

Reasons for agreeing: In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in support of the proposal were:

- **An opportunity to improve public transport:**
Respondents focused on enhancing the **public transport** offer in the county as a key benefit of the Deal, particularly in the opportunity to increase **bus efficiency** (296 comments in total).
- **Adopting an evidence-led approach to developing an enhanced transport offer:**
Underpinned by the opportunity for **action** after experiencing stagnation/decay in the county’s transport infrastructure, new approaches such as enhanced **contract management** directed by local **intelligence** were seen as a key benefit (100 comments in total).
- **Adopting an environmentally friendly approach to transport:**
Consideration of active transport, car sharing and **alternative** approaches to transport and developing a net zero /low carbon transport infrastructure to address adverse **environmental** issues were seen as positives of the proposal (97 comments in total).
- **New road building:**
The opportunity to meet the perceived need for new road building (32 comments).
- **An opportunity to enhance transport connectivity for all:**
The opportunity to increase transport **connectivity** across the county to link key service areas such as employment and tourism with a focus on improving links to/within **rural** areas (21 comments in total).

Reasons for disagreeing: In descending order, the most frequently mentioned broad themes in opposition to the proposal were:

- **No faith anything will result from the proposal:**
Respondents felt that any **action** proposed was unlikely to materialise and the required skills to adopt a new approach in the county did not exist particularly around changes associated with **contract management** (50 comments in total).
- **Public transport is broken beyond fixing:**
The view was that **public transport** is beyond fixing and respondents were not convinced proposal will make any difference to **bus efficiency** (46 comments in total).

- **Too little, too late:**

The **resources** offered within the proposal are not enough to reverse the decline in **road investment** and overall the funds are too little to achieve anything of note (34 comments in total).

- **Achieving net zero:**

In terms of **environmental** transport initiatives respondents feel Norfolk is focused on the car not on net zero. Additionally, the infrastructure is not in place to support a switch to electric or walking/cycling to provide **alternatives**, and the required powers to achieve this are only available to a combined authority (32 comments in total).

- **Consultation:**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (15 comments).

- **Rural transport improvements:**

Reservations exist that any transport improvements in the Deal will reach beyond towns and cities into rural communities (14 comments).

Reasons unsure: In descending order of mentions, the broad themes from those respondents who were unsure whether to support or oppose the proposal were:

- **A desire to see a focus on delivery:**

Respondents were concerned that the **resources** on offer were not enough to address the needs of Norfolk, including the need to be convinced adequate funds are available and there is the opportunity to bring **public transport** back into public ownership. This includes more effective public transport run through alternative approaches such as **contract management** and **connectivity** by focusing on delivery not new roads, including recognition that not enough funds are available for **road repairs** (59 comments in total).

- **Addressing transport needs for all:**

Respondents need to be convinced bus efficiency will address the needs of all people in towns, cities and rural settings. Above all ensuring transport improvements meet the needs of people in rural areas (35 comments in total).

- **Addressing net zero:**

Respondents expressed disappointment with the lack of ambition for sustainable transport and other alternatives (13 comments).

- **Consultation:**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (12 comments).

4.11 Elected Leader and Cabinet

Respondents were asked to provide their response to the question:

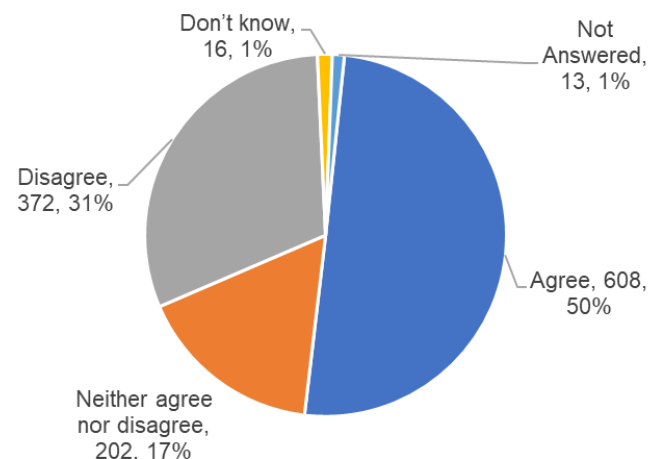
To what extent do you agree or disagree with plans for an elected leader and cabinet system of governance?

4.11.1 Quantitative (closed) responses

Respondents provided their response against a closed rating scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree. When the results were analysed of respondents were in agreement, on balance, with the proposal as seen below:

- Half (50%) agreed with the proposal (24% strongly agree and 26% agree)
- Just under a third (31%) disagreed (23% strongly disagree, 8% disagree)
- Just under a fifth (17%) were unsure (neither agree nor disagree)
- 1% did not know
- The remainder (1%) did not provide an answer.

Response	No.	%
Agree	608	50%
Neither agree nor disagree	202	17%
Disagree	372	31%
Don't know	16	1%
Not Answered	13	1%
Total	1,211	100%



4.11.2 Qualitative (open) responses

Responses to the prompt ***“Why do you say that?”*** were analysed and grouped thematically around reasons for support, opposition or being unsure, as shown below.

Reasons for agreeing: In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in support of the proposal were:

- **Enhanced local democratic structures:**
The proposed Deal provides the potential for local people to have a direct involvement in decisions through a directly elected leader in the county, resulting in enhanced **democratic, accountability**. It is hoped that this will lead to increased **transparency** and openness of decision making (301 comments in total).

- **A focus on Norfolk:**
The proposed Deal has the potential to overcome any perceived negative impact of the increased politics in decision-making by having an elected leader focused on the benefits for Norfolk. This could help restore public trust in elected Members and perceptions of Members' competency (74 comments in total).
- **A revised approach to strategy for Norfolk:**
Providing an opportunity to think in a more strategic way (34 comments in total).
- **Positive experience from elsewhere:**
Perceived success/failure of other elected mayors/leaders (14 comments in total).
- **Inefficiency:**
Despite an overall positive acceptance of the proposal, there were some concerns over potential increases in bureaucracy and added layers of decision making seen as a diversion of resources leading to inefficiency (7 comments in total).
- **Centralisation:**
Removing important links to local communities through district councils by an increased centralisation of functions under the proposed Deal (5 comments in total).
- **Consultation:**
Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the **consultation** questions (4 comments).

Reasons for disagreeing: In descending order, the most frequently mentioned broad themes in opposition to the proposal were:

- **Reduced accountability, local connections and trust:**
The Deal has the potential to remove democratic **accountability** through a perceived removal of the process of dialogue and associated checks and balances. In turn this could undermine **trust** in elected officials by concentrating power in one individual, which was felt to be **undemocratic** removing transparency from the process and introducing an increased impact of **politics** in decision-making. The structure put in place could lead to **over-centralisation**, breaking connections with local communities currently achieved through district councils and potentially introducing **inefficiency** through functional duplication (366 comments in total).
- **Negative experience from elsewhere:**
Respondents opposed the deal based on their own negative experiences or views of the performance of other mayors elsewhere in the country and the Police and Crime Commissioner locally (37 comments in total).

- **Consultation:**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the **consultation** questions (14 comments).

Reasons unsure: In descending order of mentions, the broad themes from those respondents who were unsure whether to support or oppose the proposal were:

- **The need to demonstrate transparent and accountable processes:**

The **politics** of the arrangements were a cause of confusion, particularly if the leader is from an opposition party to the majority and how this would be managed. To counter this, respondents felt the leader must act in the interests of Norfolk to enhance **accountability** ensuring the process is **democratic**. All of which need to be underpinned by **trust** and **transparency** (108 comments in total).

- **An efficient and democratically accountable leader's office:**

The potential for being seen as **undemocratic** must be countered alongside a move away for potential **inefficiency** through duplication of function in the leader's office. This must incorporate consideration of the ways in which the changed County Council District Council (**CCDC**) **relations** can be most effectively managed through these arrangements (32 comments in total).

- **Consultation:**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the **consultation** questions (5 comments in total).

- **Resources:**

Reassurance sought that the **resources** in the settlement are adequate and futureproofed (3 comments).

4.12 Principles of devolution

Respondents were asked to provide their response to the question:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the principles of devolution and the benefits it brings to Norfolk?

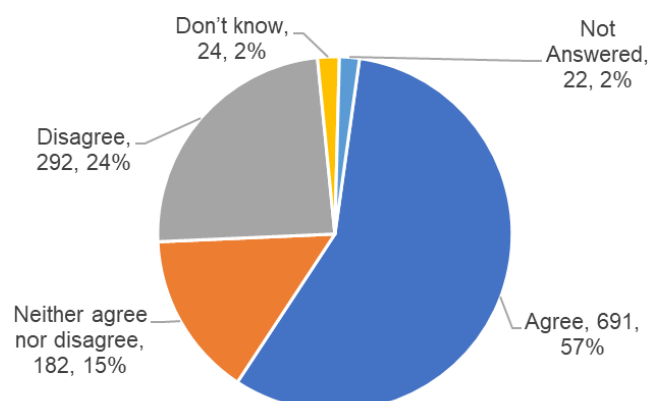
4.12.1 Quantitative (closed) responses

Respondents provided their response against a closed rating scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree. When the results were analysed the majority of respondents were in agreement with the proposal as seen below:

- The majority (57%) agreed with the proposal (25% strongly agree, 32% agree)
- Just under a quarter (24%) disagreed (16% strongly disagree, 8% disagree)
- 15% were unsure (neither agree nor disagree)
- 2% did not know

- The remainder (2%) did not provide an answer.

Response	No.	%
Agree	691	57%
Neither agree nor disagree	182	15%
Disagree	292	24%
Don't know	24	2%
Not Answered	22	2%
Total	1,211	100%



4.12.2 Qualitative (open) responses

Responses to the prompt “**Why do you say that?**” were analysed and grouped thematically around reasons for support, opposition or being unsure, as shown below.

Reasons for agreeing: In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in support of the proposal were:

- **Enhanced accountability based on local understanding:**
The proposal allows for enhanced **accountability** and lobbying in the interests of the county based on **intelligence** rooted in local knowledge about the specifics of the area underpinned by understanding of context, history and geography of local and hyper local **locations** (158 comments in total).
- **Pragmatic acceptance of conditions for enhance national visibility:**
The **terms** of the Deal, while not entirely suitable/acceptable are accepted to achieve a potentially enhanced **national voice** for the county at Westminster, with a practical acceptance that **politics** mean there may be a price to pay in the future (104 comments in total).
- **Acceptance of the principles to access resources otherwise unavailable:**
The view is that county will be **better off** in terms of additional funds and self-determination, although the **resources** are recognised as not being very large. However, it is recognised that without the **funds** associated with the Deal it will be harder to make progress, while offering the opportunity to reduce duplication of function and improve **efficiency** (81 comments in total).

Reasons for disagreeing: In descending order, the most frequently mentioned broad themes in opposition to the proposal were:

- **Failing to achieve any gains through added bureaucracy:**
Significant concern was expressed over the potential for **inefficiency** by introducing increased bureaucracy and added layers of decision. This was felt to be compounded by the inherent potential for **duplication** of function within the Deal. Further, related, negative comment focused on the perceptions of a

poor performance **record** of the county council which did not promote confidence in the ability to deliver the Deal (110 comments in total).

- **Potentially difficult conditions:**

The **terms** associated with the Deal have the potential to be unacceptable, with the impact of **politics** felt to be potentially of significant negative impact in the future (85 comments in total).

- **The financial settlement is not worthwhile:**

The **funds** were not felt to be enough to compensate for the additional responsibilities given to Norfolk under the Deal and in the long run the county would be **worse off** (47 comments in total).

- **Loss of democratic accountability through the election of a leader:**

Concern was expressed about the loss of democratic **accountability** through concentration of power in the hands of one person in the shape of the elected leader, which in turn was felt to be **undemocratic** by reducing checks and balances (46 comments in total).

- **Consultation:**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (18 comments).

Reasons unsure: In descending order of mentions, the broad themes from those respondents who were unsure whether to support or oppose the proposal were:

- **Potentially difficult conditions:**

The **terms** associated with the Deal have the potential to be unacceptable, with the impact of **politics** felt to be potentially of significant negative impact in the future (64 comments in total).

- **Failing to achieve any gains through added bureaucracy:**

Significant concern was expressed over the potential for **inefficiency** by introducing increased bureaucracy and added layers of decision-making. This was felt to be compounded by the inherent potential for **duplication** of function within the Deal. Further, related, negative comment focused on the perceptions of a poor performance **record** of the county council which did not promote confidence in the ability to deliver the Deal (29 comments in total).

- **Futureproofing governance:**

Concern over the extent to which the Deal provides for the opportunity for local people to have a direct involvement in decisions through local democratic arrangements making the leader **accountable** once the agreement is made with Government (15 comments in total).

- **Is the Deal worth it:**

Reservations over the extent to which the **resources** offered under the Deal are sufficient to deliver the additional devolved responsibilities and will the

funds continue to be available in the future; 30 years is a long time (14 comments in total).

- **Consultation:**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (11 comments).

- **Intelligence:**

Direction of activity and allocations based on local knowledge about the specifics of the area (6 comments).

5. SUMMARY OF INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF DIRECT STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC RESPONSES

This section provides a summary of the full analysis report produced independently by the Consultation Institute (tCI) available as **Annexe Two** of this document.

Norfolk County Council commissioned the Consultation Institute (tCI) to analyse the responses received from stakeholders and members of the public as part of the consultation on County Deal devolution arrangements for Norfolk. The details of stakeholder organisations making these submissions are shown in Annexe Two.

5.1 Responses

The responses analysed in this short report came from three main sources:

- Responses submitted to the online survey as official representation of opinion by a stakeholder organisation
- Responses submitted to the online survey where individuals mentioned the organisation they worked for when they were asked the basis on which they were responding
- Written submissions to the consultation provided in the form of letters or emails

In addition to the stakeholder responses, submissions were also made directly to the consultation via the Have Your Say portal from members of the public.

5.2 Written Stakeholder Responses

In total 13 responses were received from stakeholders, either via letter or email. Reporting is based on the following grouping of submissions:

District and City Council:

- Breckland District Council
- Broadland District Council
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council
- Norwich City Council
- Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council
- South Norfolk Council
- North Norfolk District Council

Parish Council:

- Wells-next-the-sea Council
- Hempnall Parish Council

Major Employers:

- Norwich Airport
- Norwich Research Park
- Aviva

Statutory Partner:

- NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board

Other Key Stakeholder Groups:

- Dereham Deaf Group
- New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership
- Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
- Norfolk Youth Parliament
- University of East Anglia

5.2.1 Overall Comments

Borough, District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** welcome the concept of devolution and highlighted the key aspects of support:
 - Devolving more powers locally was welcomed, allowing the tackling of challenges around skills and transport more effectively.
 - Devolving funding over a long-term basis.
 - Creating the ability to form new functions like Development Corporations.

However, the following concerns were raised:

- The Deal overlooks the important role of District Councils, including their role as housing and planning authorities.
 - Concerns that the proposal misses the opportunity of a Mayoral Combined Authority which would have County and District at the decision-making table. This was framed with particular reference to the potential to undermine the existing Enterprise Zones.
 - Reservations around the proposed Directly Elected Leader (DEL) model. Citing the advantages of the tried and trusted Mayoral model used elsewhere in the country.
 - The proposed Deal lacks ambition, both in comparison with previously agreed devolution deals and the Government's own policy as set out in the Levelling Up White Paper. The proposed Deal is felt to miss significant opportunities normally associated with Level 3 including mayoral control of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).
- Following a discussion at full Council, **King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council** is reserving its final position until the final debate and decision at Norfolk County Council and no further correspondence was received.

The letter sets out three key areas of consideration following the County Council decision in December 2023:

- King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council's powers and sovereignty will remain undiminished;
- West-Norfolk will have a fair say in the priorities being set for any new funding under the 'deal'; and

- West-Norfolk will have a fair opportunity to access such funding.
- **South Norfolk Council** supports the principles of devolution and the benefits it can bring but believe the proposed Deal does not stand up to scrutiny. Citing a directly elected Mayoral Combined Authority as the preferred option for the future which:
 - Avoids the creation of an 8th structure of local government, which is only applicable to Norfolk and Suffolk.
 - Allows for the widest possible and equal participation which includes district councils, with all the powers needed to strategically plan and deliver pulling in the same direction.
 - Brings stability, not just politically, but financially.
 - Is more ambitious, embedded in a strong, collaborative, tried and tested governance model – *“which would allow us to deliver more, further and faster”*
- **Norwich City Council** wrote to set out its position *“as a matter of principle, the city council supports the devolution of powers, responsibilities, and funding from central to local government.”* However, the city council does not feel the devolution deal on offer goes far enough, is not ambitious enough, and is too generic. It doesn’t reflect some of the unique needs of the region and the offer Norfolk can make to government in terms of housing; industry and commerce; agriculture; skills; energy and carbon reduction. In that sense, it represents a missed opportunity.

The city council took an overall view of the consultation that in the absence of any realistic likelihood of the government changing its approach to devolution away from its standard template tactic, the city council’s focus now is on getting the best of what’s on offer for the city, which will also benefit the wider county.

It’s clear from the recent devolution deals in places such as Yorkshire and the East Midlands that the government’s approach to devolution follows a standard template – a suite of fairly limited powers devolved to upper tier authorities, together with an investment fund of c£20m a year for 30 years, with some one-off money for housing and development. This standard template forms the basis of the deal offered to Norfolk, which makes it generic and underwhelming.

Parish Councils

- **Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council** wrote:

Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council has considered the Norfolk Devolution Deal and has significant concerns.

Therefore Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council does not support the deal.
- **Hempnall Parish Council** opposes the County Deal for Norfolk based on the introduction of an extra layer of bureaucracy, the Police and Crime Commissioner was cited as a similar unwarranted local overhead.

The Deal is seen as ‘bribe’ to accept Government’s offer, with no reason being provided why offered investment cannot be delivered through existing structures.

Major Employers

- **Aviva** wrote to support the proposed devolution deal, focusing on opportunities to improve skills, invest in infrastructure and housing and to deliver an economic plan over the long term. The scope for public private partnership was highlighted alongside complementary commitments to achieving net zero.

Aviva welcome the opportunity for continued partnership working and to contribute to the consultation on the proposed Deal.

- **Norwich Research Park (NRP)** wrote to support the proposed Deal, highlighting areas of ongoing research and the potential for enhanced opportunities through attraction and retention of high growth businesses.
- **Norwich Airport** wrote to support the Deal, viewed as providing:
 - greater decision-making powers and resources to local leaders and communities.
 - a much-needed boost to our region's infrastructure, allowing for improved transport links and greater investment in emerging industries.

Other Key Stakeholders

- **Norfolk Youth Parliament** reported support for the Deal and that young people liked the idea of having the leader of Norfolk County Council that is a councillor elected by members of the public.

5.2.2 Comments regarding the consultation on the Deal

Borough, District and City Councils

- **South Norfolk Council** wrote to express disappointment at the timing of the consultation exercise. This was expressed as two linked issues:
 - The consultation questions which are felt to be leading and fail to separate the general principles of devolution from the specific details of the proposed Deal.
 - The timing of the consultation, which is felt to be premature and lacking in detail, particularly around the governance arrangement associated with a Directly Elected Leader.

The council expressed disappointment in the lack of involvement in development and opportunities for coproduction of the proposed Deal.

5.2.3 Local control of money devolved from Government

Borough, District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** wrote to express concern that the investment pot ‘while generous compared to nothing’ is significantly below the needs of the areas and will not begin to address the underfunding experienced in parts of Norfolk ongoing for some time.
- **Broadland District Council** strongly agreed with the proposal on the basis that it is the only Deal available to Norfolk to enable better outcomes for residents and businesses. Broadland also believes that Norfolk should have maximum devolution based on:
 - Being the biggest deal with the most powers.
 - Involving and engaging all the principal authorities.
 - Building on the tried and tested model for devolution.

There were, however, a number of reservations expressed around this support.

- **Great Yarmouth Borough Council:** wrote to make several points on the proposed financial settlement in the proposed Deal:
 - £600m over the next 30 years is investment into the County is welcome, but there are concerns that the sum is not index-linked and when calculating a discounted cashflow the real investment sum becomes much reduced. Therefore, a request is made that Norfolk County Council, Norfolk MPs and District Leaders continue to lobby government for an improved deal, and as a minimum to have an inflationary index-linked deal.
 - The County Deal provides the opportunity to unlock some capacity funding and Great Yarmouth Borough Council wish to see an early dialogue on how that capacity funding and future revenue funding could and should be used to drive forward an investment plan with strong and effective governance. However, it does nothing to address any existing capital investment deficits.
- **Norwich City Council** wrote to set out its position on the financial settlement in the Deal. The funding will not fix the financial struggles that all councils in the region are facing. It won’t help plug the county council’s £60m budget gap, nor the city’s £10m gap over the next four years.

The city council and county council must be at one in lobbying Whitehall to make good on its promises to fix local government funding and not allow any devolution deal to be used as a cover story. While the government’s devo template may help provide some funding for infrastructure, it’s not going to help us protect local services and we must continue to be vocal about that. Levelling up must ensure that people services – health, education, social care and skills – are adequately funded too.

The City Council also argue that Norwich is the economic and cultural powerhouse not just of the county but of the wider region. The future success of Norfolk is held to be dependent on the future success and prosperity of Norwich.

Devolution needs to benefit the unique attributes of the city and contribute to their further development. It will be crucial for the city council and county council - under the proposed directly elected leader model - to work together to ensure that Norwich gets its fair share of the devolution prize in order to drive growth and prosperity for the local and regional economy. City council officers will work to develop business cases for investment so that the benefits of devolution can make a visible difference in housing, industry, transport, carbon reduction and environmental enhancement.

- **North Norfolk District Council** strongly agrees with and welcomes the principles behind a Devolution Deal for Norfolk, with powers and funding over infrastructure issues and key service provision being transferred from Whitehall to Norfolk
- **South Norfolk Council (SNC)** strongly disagree with this proposal. SNC do not disagree that Norfolk should have more control of devolved funding, stating that Norfolk should have maximum devolution, involving and engaging all principal authorities and built upon a tried and tested model. However, the specifics of the proposal are believed to result in a materially worse proposition than is available elsewhere in terms of both money and powers.

Major Employers

- **Norwich Airport** wrote to confirm its belief that with increased autonomy and funding, Norfolk will be better equipped to address the unique challenges facing our region, from promoting economic growth and job creation to improving the overall quality of life for residents.
- **Norwich Research Park** highlighted their existing activity to attract research funding, inward and private sector investment and highlighted the opportunity for further partnership working under the proposed devolution Deal.

Statutory Partner

- **NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB)** wrote to explain that, although vital, the NHS only accounts for a fraction of health and wellbeing. The rest depends on other things: genetics, our environment - whether we have decent work, enough money, close family and friends, a warm home, clean air - and our own lifestyles. The County Deal for Norfolk contains significant and very welcome funding which would help them to address some of these wider determinants of health.

The Integrated Care Board welcomes not just the additional funding, but the ambitions set out in the deal to improve housing, reduce carbon emissions, support active transport, help people get the skills they need and into good jobs. Taking further action on these issues would help to improve local people's health and wellbeing, as well as make good on their commitments to prioritise prevention, reduce health inequalities and enable resilient communities, as set out in their Integrated Care Strategy for Norfolk and Waveney.

Other Key Stakeholders

- **Norfolk Chambers of Commerce** strongly agreed with the proposal identifying that at present the county has to compete for funding against large areas such as the Northern Powerhouse and the Midlands Engine, and as a rural area the business case does not always compare well against large urban areas. The ability to control our own budget, means we spend it where is to most needed across Norfolk, rather than having to justify why we deserve the funding more than another UK location.
- **Norfolk Youth Parliament:** Generally young people were supportive of the devolution Deal as it brings more money and opportunities to Norfolk.

Young people would like to see the money being spent on children and young people as much as possible, to show investment in their futures.

Young people set the following spending priorities:

- Community engagement and cohesion within communities and culture
 - Support for engaging with further education
 - Environmental priorities
 - City and town centres
 - Spaces for young people, universal services for young people and open youth provision
 - Well-being and mental health services
 - Transport: for young people to be independent they need a good bus service and for those rurally isolated, a service that runs till late.
 - Units where families affected by things like dementia can spend time with their family as it is not always nice for them in the care homes where they reside.
- **Dereham Deaf Group** held a group discussion in which they set out their main priority as ensuring Norfolk County Council direct funds to help them. They do not feel the Deal will help in this area; however, their key investment priorities are to see:
 - more organisations who can help with Advocacy in their language BSL
 - hubs in Norfolk, with Advocacy in their language BSL so that people not in or around Norwich or King's Lynn can actually get help.

A plea was also made for commissioners to co-produce services with Deaf and Deafblind people from start to finish.

- The **New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership** agreed with the proposal and wrote to express a firm belief in devolution of funding and powers to local areas. Funding and powers are controlled more centrally in England than in comparable economies. This was viewed as stifling local enterprise and growth, meaning local partners have to adopt short term approaches to secure central Government funding rather than focus on longer term local priorities.

The £20m a year investment fund is welcomed. The deal secured by Norfolk is comparable with other areas and a good start, but UEA would be keen to see further funding and powers devolved in further deals, as has happened in other parts of the country.

- The **University of East Anglia** (UEA) strongly agreed with the proposal and wrote stating Norfolk's needs are distinct from its neighbouring counties. While there is commonality of need to a degree with Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex, if able to tailor policy and target investment to the specific needs of the county to develop a bespoke socio-economic strategy, Norfolk would be able to unlock the tremendous potential on offer here.

5.2.4 Local business voice for Norfolk

Borough, District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** agreed with the proposal supporting the concept of a strong business voice, and for the role of business and business leaders in helping shape policy and interventions. There were, however, reservations expressed on the lack of recognition of the proposed Deal to represent the diversity of businesses and economies in Norfolk, a role district, borough and city councils could actively assist in, which is overlooked in the current proposals.

The preference for a Mayoral Combined Authority structure for business support was also expressed.

- **Broadland District Council** agreed 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, they did have concerns with the proposal that the LEP should be integrated into Norfolk County Council as a single institution.
- **Great Yarmouth Borough Council** state their preference for a Mayoral Combined Authority model of governance which would have embodied the functions of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP); without such governance the future of the LEP and its assets remains a concern. Clarification of future ownership is urgently required and Great Yarmouth Borough Council would expect to see these held within a joint company with District Councils.
- **North Norfolk District Council** agrees that there should be a strong "business voice" in any County Deal agreed for Norfolk as a key stakeholder community in Norfolk's future growth and prosperity.
- **South Norfolk Council** strongly disagree with this proposal on the grounds shown below, believing the devolution deal should be for the County of Norfolk, not for Norfolk County Council. The exclusion of districts will result in there being no powers to achieve better planning, housing, cleaner environment, welfare or growth

Major Employers

- **Norwich Research Park** believe that by working closely with a devolved Norfolk County Council, it can maximise the societal impact of publicly funded research, through the campus-wide enterprise strategy, attract inward private sector investment in high-growth business activity and ensure the development of compelling new facilities for exciting companies.
- **Norwich Airport** see the devolution deal as helping to create skilled jobs in areas such as technology, innovation, and renewable energy, ensuring that our region remains at the forefront of the UK's economic growth.

Other Key Stakeholders

- The **New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership** neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal and wrote to state it is not yet possible to say if the proposals will give Norfolk a stronger business voice, because at this stage the proposed structures, roles and powers of the Norfolk Business Board have yet to be determined.
- **Norfolk Chambers of Commerce** strongly agreed with the proposal
- The **University of East Anglia (UEA)** strongly agreed with the proposal

5.2.5 Adult education

Borough, District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** disagreed with the proposal setting out their reasons for opposition as (in brief) whilst we wholeheartedly welcome the devolution of budgets we believe that these powers and funding should be devolved to a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA), and not to Norfolk County Council.
- **Broadland District Council** agreed with the proposal:
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
- **North Norfolk District Council** agrees with the principle of the Adult Education Budget for Norfolk forming part of the County Deal for Norfolk, it does not believe that this budget will be best placed within Norfolk County Council.

Major Employers

- **Norwich Airport** believe that the proposed Deal will provide the opportunity to develop skills in areas such as technology, innovation and renewable energy.

Other Key Stakeholders

- The **New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership** agreed with the proposal and wrote stating “...*ensuring individuals and businesses have the right skills is critically important for the success of the Norfolk economy.*” This funding, however, needs to be ringfenced to ensure it is solely used for the intended purpose of ensuring individuals and businesses have the right skills, which is critically important for the success of the Norfolk economy.
- **Norfolk Chambers of Commerce** strongly agreed with the proposal, stating the following:

As the ERB responsible for delivering the LSIP, we feel it is fundamental that we work in close collaboration with NCC to understand the needs of both the business community and the education providers. Having local control of the adult education budget means that the funds can be used where they are most needed, we can 'join the dots' and create an holistic plan of action to deliver to maximum effect.

- The **University of East Anglia** (UEA) strongly agreed with the proposal expressing the view that having greater autonomy over skills investment and policy delivery will enable more bespoke, localised decision making about pipeline needs. The University also stated the view that the County Council's work with education providers at all levels (schools, further education and higher education) should become more responsive to Norfolk's economic opportunities.

5.2.6 Housing and employment

Borough, District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** agreed with the proposal providing the following reasons for and caveats to that support:

We are incredibly positive about the broad concept of opening up housing and employment sites in Norfolk, providing they are appropriate to do so and fit in the context of local priorities and local plans. However, we do also see that there are numerous missed opportunities that could have been secured, which would have fully maximised the devolution deals potential. As an example, we believe that it would have been beneficial to seek greater power over infrastructure through powers that have previously been devolved to other Mayoral areas, these include: the power to create Land Commissions across all principal authorities; and the ability for Development Corporations to issue development bonds.

- **Broadland District Council** agreed with the proposal making the following comments:

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.

- **Great Yarmouth Borough Council** would welcome an early conversation and understanding of the role which Mayoral Development Corporations could play in supporting a place-based agenda.
- **North Norfolk District Council** supports the principle of the County Deal for Norfolk assisting with the opening up of key housing and employment sites...*although the consultation document provides little real detail as to how this might be achieved.*"
- **South Norfolk Council** strongly disagreed with the proposal citing the following reasons for their position:

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.

Parish Councils

- **Hempnall Parish Council** expressed concern over the possible imposition of Investment Zones and increased housing, offering evidence of the potential negative impact of both to Norfolk:

Hempnall Parish Council is very concerned about proposals to weaken, or perhaps even remove, the role of the planning system, within Investment Zones. A fully functioning planning system should remain in operation in all parts of the County. Furthermore housing targets in existing and emerging local plans (e.g. the GNLP) are already excessive and unnecessary as evidenced, for example, in South Norfolk, Broadland and Norwich where around 30,000 houses in the current plan (The Joint Core Strategy) have not been built out (the current commitment) and are therefore being "rolled over" into the GNLP.

Other Key Stakeholders

- The **New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership** agreed with the proposal and wrote to state the proposal is very welcome, although the amount of funding being devolved are relatively modest compared with the need and potential across Norfolk. This proposal is welcome as a first step, and the LEP encourages Norfolk and Government to rapidly build on this initial agreement.
- **Norfolk Chambers of Commerce** strongly agreed with the proposal, writing:

Norfolk needs to be seen as 'open for business' this means we need to be able to attract talent - who will need appropriate housing and infrastructure and employment sites to provide opportunity etc.

- The **University of East Anglia** (UEA) agreed with the proposal and wrote:

UEA's commitments to biodiversity and net zero objectives mean that we will always prefer the redevelopment of existing sites where possible. However, we recognise the importance of economic development in the county and, where appropriate, could offer opinion on a case-by-case basis.

5.2.7 Integrated Transport

Borough, District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** strongly agreed with the proposal for the following reasons:

We agree to the broad concept of integrating all elements of transport for Norfolk, particularly if they are able to be integrated with wider functions in support of the economy. As before, we believe the most effective vehicle for achieving this is one which ensures strong partnership and engagement such as a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) for Norfolk.

- **Broadland District Council** agreed with the proposal making the following comments:

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.

- **South Norfolk Council** disagreed with this proposal, citing the following reasons:

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.

The most ambitious level 3 powers for strategic passenger transport are only available to MCAs. It is inexplicable why Norfolk should settle for a deal that excludes the potential for an 'Oyster' style card.

Major Employers

- **Norwich Airport** wrote of the critical importance of a thriving local economy for their business and the wider tourism industry. They believe that the devolution Deal will be of significant benefit to both their business and the wider business

and tourism sectors that rely on the airport to connect with the rest of the UK and the world.

The response went on to detail an understanding of the importance of regional connectivity and the role that the airport plays in connecting Norfolk with the rest of the UK and the world. The proposed devolution Deal could provide a much-needed boost to the region's infrastructure, allowing for improved transport links and greater investment in emerging industries.

Other Key Stakeholders

- The **New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership** agreed with the proposal stating it as very welcome. For too long Norfolk's transport planning has been held back by Government giving funding in different funding pots and over different timescales to different terms and conditions. This makes it difficult for budget planning, reduces efficiencies and makes it harder for the council to invest in the infrastructure required to accelerate low carbon transport. It will be important to gain a commitment from Government that the amount of funding being devolved is not a net reduction.

- **Norfolk Chambers of Commerce** strongly agreed with the proposal writing:

An integrated transport settlement will allow us to consider the needs of our multi modal rural environment. Rural public transport must be improved in order to allow people to access both employment and education. Connectivity is huge across the whole of our region and being given control of our own budget means we get the opportunity to do the right thing for the needs of Norfolk residents and the business community.

- The **University of East Anglia** (UEA) agreed with the proposal and wrote:

Norfolk's rural geography contributes to its minimal and fragmented public transport provision. This lack of integrated transport impacts the skills and jobs markets, and therefore the economy, as many people cannot afford personal transport and therefore cannot commute to jobs

5.2.8 Elected Leader and cabinet

Borough, District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** strongly disagreed with the proposal based on the belief that the proposed system of governance set out in the Deal, present a number of risks, as well as a missed opportunity. For the following reasons Breckland believe a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) model not a Directly Elected Leader (DEL) is the most suitable for Norfolk.
- **Broadland District Council** neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal making the following comments:

We have concerns with the plans for an elected leader and cabinet system of governance which is untried and untested. 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. We want a model which does not leave Norfolk behind.

- **Great Yarmouth Borough Council** wish to be assured:

that we will continue to be involved in the development of that governance; and the principles of inclusivity and transparency will prevail. Governance that respects and protects the unique role which District Councils play in shaping their places and driving forward an inclusive growth agenda is critical to our continued support.

- **North Norfolk District Council** strongly disagreed with this proposal, citing the following reasons:

Whilst North Norfolk District Council is supportive of the principles of a devolution deal being agreed for Norfolk; the Council is not persuaded that the current governance model being proposed to administer the County Deal in Norfolk will ensure that the voices of the diverse communities of interest which exist across Norfolk – urban, rural, coastal, young and old, people from different backgrounds and cultures, business and environment - will be properly reflected through the governance model of the County Council with a Directly Elected Leader.

- **South Norfolk Council** strongly disagree with this proposal, citing the following for their position:

We strongly disagree with plans for an elected leader and cabinet model and believe that this governance model will inhibit delivery within Norfolk and block the Levelling Up of our County. We want a model which does not subordinate Norfolk. Norfolk and Suffolk would be the only areas in the country which would be in this model of governance, at a time where Government is focused on further devolution to Mayoral Combined Authorities...

Other Key Stakeholders

- The **New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership** agreed with the proposal because a directly elected leader is a requirement from Government to secure the new investment fund, which is the biggest single component of the deal. However, concerns were expressed about the model – for example:

- Can one person run such a large organisation as a county council and manage the deal.
- Will the title – DEL – rather than Mayor mean they are treated in a different and more junior way to mayors.
- What is the role of the other councils in the area if the DEL is only accountable to the county council.

Nonetheless the LEP feel a directly elected leader will enable Norfolk to have a figurehead who can make the case for Government and raise the profile of the county in the way other successful mayors are doing.

- **Norfolk Chambers of Commerce** agreed with the proposal, writing:

The Directly Elected Leader must ensure that they are doing good for the whole county and not just their own ambitions. This role should be altruistic and about the long term wellbeing and development of Norfolk

- The **University of East Anglia (UEA)** strongly agreed with the proposal and wrote:

Strong, accountable leadership usually leads to better decision making. Whilst there is no guarantee that devolution will lead to stronger leadership, the framework for a directly elected leader of the Council, supported by a cabinet of councillors, will strengthen the legitimacy and accountability of local governance.

5.2.9 Principles of devolution

Borough, District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** strongly agree with the proposal as a catalyst for change and delivery to the benefit of local communities. However, there are issues highlighted with the Deal's proposed governance.
- **Broadland District Council** agreed with the proposal making the following comments:

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.

- **Great Yarmouth Borough Council** understand and appreciate that the ‘Deal’ is between Norfolk County Council and central government, however the governance that determines the local decision-making and prioritisation of investment is critical to the success of the Deal.
- **Norwich City Council:** in terms of governance, it’s essential that Norfolk pursue a model of double devolution where powers and resources flow to those authorities which are closest to their communities. The last three years in particular have shown that local is best. The city council – and Norfolk’s other districts - provides effective local leadership. The districts know their communities and hold the responsibility for place-shaping through housing and regeneration responsibilities, their planning powers and through the £billions in assets held.

The city council and other districts need to be at the table working with the county council to design and implement a governance system which ensures that the money and powers are devolved to the right strategic priorities and accountability sits at the lowest possible level of governance (district level).

- **North Norfolk District Council** neither agreed nor disagreed with this proposal for the following reasons:

North Norfolk District Council finds this question difficult to answer. North Norfolk District Council recognises the opportunities and supports the principles of devolution, allowing local people in Norfolk to have direct influence in setting the future direction and growth priorities of our County.

- **South Norfolk Council** disagreed with this proposal for the following reasons:

Recent announcements from the Treasury have made it clear that they will give preference to MCAs in future. What is being contemplated for Norfolk is not an MCA. So, we are considering something that is second-best at inception. It is not entirely clear why anyone would find this acceptable.

Other Key Stakeholders

- The **New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership** strongly agree with the principles of devolution – for funding and powers to be devolved from central Government to local areas. The Deal on offer to Norfolk is felt to be broadly comparable with the current round of deals. A directly elected leader is a necessary part of the deal. However, the Deal should only be the starting point, not a signal to Government that Norfolk has had its deal. Therefore it should be the starting point of further discussions with Government in order to ensure Norfolk is not disadvantaged by the Government’s Levelling Up agenda and the county’s investment priorities and opportunities can be fully recognised by Government.
- **Norfolk Chambers of Commerce** strongly agreed with the proposal, writing:

Norfolk is an amazing place to live and work. We have world leading sectors and a dynamic business community - this is our opportunity to showcase what we can do, given the funding and powers to do the best for Norfolk.

- The **University of East Anglia** (UEA) strongly agreed with the proposal and wrote:

UEA is a civic institution founded in, by and for the region, but with a global impact. Our annual contribution to the economy in the East of England was estimated at £560m GVA in 2019. We are committed to being an institution that looks beyond our immediate business needs to the need of the wider community including business and other anchor institutions. As such we have just completed a region-wide democratic engagement process gathering organic views of the University's role, and potential role, in the region. What that has made clear is that while there are general issues facing communities and organisations here that reflect national and international contexts, there are also particular strengths and challenges. This suggests a bespoke approach to local governance would be highly beneficial.

5.3 Public submissions to the consultation

In total eight written responses were received directly to the consultation from members of the public via the County Council's Have Your Say portal. These responses are reported anonymously and have been thematically analysed below

- **Comments on the consultation process**

Some respondents (3) were concerned that the consultation was not widely publicised, suggesting many citizens were unaware of the opportunity to comment on the potential Deal.

I was dismayed to find this after the consultation for my town had already taken place. I have also discovered that none of my neighbours or friends in Norfolk are aware of this proposed deal or its implications for the county.

I don't believe you are giving your potential voters a real opportunity to have their say. Particularly as this has been kept so quiet.

I feel a survey form should have been made available to residents along with highly advertised details of venues and dates, in order to maximise attendance.

- **Support for the Deal**

There was an expression of support from two correspondents for the Deal received from correspondents.

I fully support what has been achieved by Norfolk County Council.

I think it will be very good for the county.

- **Democratic accountability**

Two respondents provide comments on the issues of democratic accountability at all levels associated with the Deal, covering:

- Concerns around the extent to which the process of selecting a Democratically Elected Leader (DEL) is seen to be fair, particularly in regards to the candidates who stand for election. Specifically the case in which the candidates do not inspire confidence.

In the situation with an elected police commissioner, there are only a few names to be selected from. What happens if none of the names of the potential candidates for leader inspires the confidence of the electorate?

- The issue was also raised over the ability of the electorate to remove the DEL in the case of a loss of confidence in their leadership.

What transparency would there be? Who would have the power to remove the elected leader/'governor' from power? Would people turn to the judiciary for resolution of each and every issue? Our judiciary are already 'stretched.'

- Concern was also raised over the potential loss of democratic accountability in circumstances where responsibility for delivery is transferred to organisations in the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, which is not accountable in the same way the County Council is.

My only comment would be that the voluntary sector, if it received more funding, would need to be more open and transparent about where the money is spent and what difference it made rather than simply going on salaries and admin costs across the VCSE sector. You, the County Council, get funding to deliver services and have a hierarchal structure and you are also properly accountable. We don't need 100+ mini service providers who are not democratically accountable in the same way. However you dress it up nobody's going up keep an eye on the money flowing into the VCSE sector.

- The issue of future accountability of the DEL's actions was also raised with the suggestion that contentious issues should be tested against public opinion.

If major changes are proposed, that affect the public, like congestion charges, there should be a local referendum. The one proposed for Cambridge has caused a lot of animosity!!

- **Funding**

The potential funding settlement offered in the Deal was also commented on, with the view that it was not enough to make any significant difference in Norfolk over the proposed timeframe.

Also the sum being offered 600m over 30 years is approximately £21 per head per year.

- There were also comments focused on ensuring the fair distribution of funding across the county, avoiding the perceived favouritism towards Norwich.

If it goes ahead i hope the money is evenly proportioned not most going to Norwich.

Maybe if successful the county council might realise there are other areas in Norfolk other than Norwich.

- The issue of transparency and accountability for the expenditure was also raised.

However, there needs to be total transparency about how and when the money will be spent.

- **Environmental concerns**

Respondents also focused on issues within the environment that the felt it was important for the Deal to address:

- Littering

A key issue for me is lack of care for our environment. Litter is lined on every roadside. And almost daily i notice more fly tipping on forest edge's.

- **Housing and Infrastructure**

- Respondents also focused on issues related to the environmental impact of development, particularly the impact of development and protection of natural habitat and the countryside.

There is a very real concern (please see Sheffield's and most recently, Plymouth's 'regeneration' plan, where large amounts of

trees were felled), that swathes of the unique and wildlife rich countryside, which is unique to Norfolk and is well-known for bringing in visitors and tourism, contributing much to the local economy, could be lost forever with too many housing developments and new roads being built.

- There was also a concern over developments on greenbelt/agricultural land and the pressure on existing infrastructure.
-

There has already been a lot of pressure for farm land to be sold for prospective developments, together with the preposterous idea from central Government that a 'new town,' consisting of 5,000 houses, plus the associated vehicles attributed to these properties, can be accommodated in mid-Norfolk. Our infrastructure and roads cannot sustain this increase in people and traffic on our narrow, windy country hedge-lined lanes, which have markedly seen a large increase in vehicles and associated traffic accidents in the last 2-3 years.

- **Transport**

Respondents highlighted issues of importance to them when considering the issue of integrated transport, specifically:

- Concerns over future road repairs
-

I see that transport is highlighted; I hope the repair of roads comes under that umbrella?

- Concerns over the concept of 15 minute cities³, taking the opportunity to offer opposition to that idea, which is not referenced in the Deal.
-

I am also aware that Norfolk has signed up to 15 minute cities. I would like reassurance that there will be no citizens restrictions of movement on the cards!

- **Comments out of scope:** The focus of the consultation was on the scope of the Deal; however, one respondent used the opportunity to exercise their right to comment on issues beyond this. In this case they wanted to raise the issue of health care, which is reported below for completeness.
-

I am also astonished that health care is not mentioned or included in this deal. Watton is desperately short of Doctors and dentists.

³ The outline concept of the 15 minute city is that all necessary amenities are within a 15-minute walk

ANNEXE ONE:

ONLINE SURVEY INDEPENDENT ANALYSIS REPORT



Norfolk County Council

County Deal Consultation

Analysis Report

27 April 2023

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The Consultation Institute (tCI) was commissioned by Norfolk County Council to analyse the open and closed question responses received to their online survey as part of the consultation on County Deal devolution arrangements for Norfolk.

The online survey was hosted on Norfolk's Citizen Space, a proprietary software system. Hard copy versions of the survey were made available to those people who were unable to access the online system and these were all inputted to the online platform for inclusion in this analysis.

This report sets out the results of that analysis.

NB: The online survey was not the only channel available for responses to the consultation, submissions were received by letter and email from stakeholders and members of the public which are analysed in a separate report.

1.1.1 Background

The consultation document "Unlock Norfolk's Potential: Together we can shape our future" provides the following introduction to the proposed County Deal.

The Government and Norfolk County Council have negotiated a proposed County Deal, which means the Government would give more powers and funding to Norfolk.

This is an opportunity for more decisions that are currently made by central Government to be made locally - by people and organisations who know and understand Norfolk and its communities.

If the Deal is agreed, Norfolk will get new decision-making powers, local control of funding currently held by central Government and additional investment of more than £600 million over the next 30 years. This will help us to boost our economy through more jobs, training and development, as well as improve our transport network and support the local environment.

The County Deal is between Government and Norfolk County Council, however the involvement of district, borough and city councils, alongside businesses and other key organisations will be essential to its success.

1.2 Response Rates

A total of 1,211 responses were received to the online survey, including hard copy input manually. Of these responses:

- 60 were received from respondents identifying as groups, organisations or businesses.
- 61 were received from respondents who mentioned the organisation they worked for or represented.
- The remainder, and overwhelming majority (1,090) were from individuals.

A full breakdown of the demographic characteristics of all who responded – where they provided that information – can be seen at Appendix One of this report.

1.3 Consultation Submission Format

Respondents had the opportunity to make submissions to the online survey in two formats:

1. **Closed questions** – respondents were asked to rate each of the proposals in the Deal using a fixed scale from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’.
 - Reporting is based on providing both number of respondents to each question and their percentage against the total response. Where percentages are used, totals may not necessarily add up to 100% because of rounding or instances where multiple responses are allowed to the same question (i.e. ‘tick all that apply’).
 - The number of respondents (base) for each question varies due to individual choice regarding questions answered.
2. **Open questions:** alongside rating the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the proposals, the online survey provided an opportunity for a ‘free text’ response (‘why do you say that?’).
 - Each comment was assigned a code to capture its content and the sentiment expressed. These codes have been combined into overall themes for reporting.
 - This analysis was conducted using the ‘tagging’ facility in Norfolk County Council’s online platform (Citizen Space). This involves the analysts reading through all the responses and developing codes to represent the core sentiment expressed in a group of comments. These codes are then added to the Citizen Space system using a facility known as ‘tags’ which can then be used to mark all similar comments.
 - These individual codes (tags) have been combined to form themes which are reported throughout.

The open text analysis is presented in the following manner:

- A summary discussion of the broad themes with a narrative explanation, which incorporates the individual codes. The number in brackets after

each theme represents the number of mentions as the sum of the codes included.

- A separate sub-section which provides more granularity about the detailed comments under each broad theme, , with the number in brackets after each code representing the total number of comments.

Quotes are provided to demonstrate the central opinion within each. All quotes are provided verbatim.

The online survey asked questions related to the seven key areas of the Deal:

- **Local control of money devolved from Government**
Target funding and resources to Norfolk's own priorities
- **Local Business Voice for Norfolk**
Give Norfolk a stronger business voice
- **Adult Education**
Invest in the skills we know we need
- **Housing and Employment**
Open-up housing and employment sites
- **Integrated Transport**
Invest in local transport planning and consolidate transport budgets
- **Elected Leader and Cabinet**
Have a Council Leader who is directly elected by the public, with the first election in May 2024
- **Principles of devolution**
Raise our profile nationally, enabling our voice to be heard by Government and help shape future policies

The analyses against each of these questions is set out in turn in the following sections.

2 LOCAL CONTROL OF MONEY DEVOLVED FROM GOVERNMENT

Respondents were asked to provide their response to the question:

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

The analysis of the open and closed elements of this question are set out below.

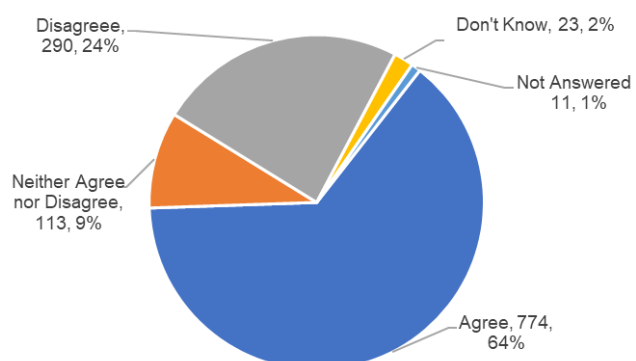
2.1 Quantitative (Closed) Responses

Respondents provided their response against a closed rating scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree.

When the results were analysed, respondents were largely in agreement with the proposal as seen below:

- The majority (64%) agreed (28% strongly agree, 36% agree)
- Around a quarter (24%) disagreed (8% disagree, 16% strongly disagree)
- Approximately one tenth (9%) neither agreed nor disagreed
- A small number (2%) did not know
- The remainder (1%) chose not to provide an answer

Response	No.	%
Agree	774	64%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	113	9%
Disagree	290	24%
Don't Know	23	2%
Not Answered	11	1%
Total	1,211	100%



2.2 Qualitative (Open) Responses

Having provided their responses to the closed questions respondents were then asked to provide a free text reason for their response.

Responses to the prompt ***“Why do you say that?”*** were analysed and grouped thematically around reasons for support, opposition or being unsure, as shown below.

NB: When reporting the themes we present the codes (tags) in **bold text** as they are recorded in the system and reported in detail in section 2.2.2.

2.2.1 Reasons for Agreeing

In descending order, the broad themes in support of the proposal were:

- **Local intelligence leading to enhanced efficiency:**

Respondents saw the Deal as an opportunity to use **intelligence** rooted in an in-depth understanding of the **local** context to improve **efficiency** of local spending for the benefit of Norfolk (501 comments in total).

- **Investing in Norfolk's future:**

Respondents were supportive based on the potential for the Deal to provide **investment** to support Norfolk's overall sustainability helping to **futureproof** through the direct control of local expenditure. This is supported by recognition that while the **finance** settlement is relatively small it is in line with other areas and will provide flexibility for local leaders to make their own investment decisions rather than following Whitehall directives (121 comments in total).

- **Enhanced local democratic structures:**

The proposed Deal provides the potential for local people to have a direct involvement in decisions through a directly elected leader in the county, resulting in enhanced accountability. It is hoped that this will lead to increased accountability although it is recognised that there will inevitably be some form of trade-off between local priorities and national direction resulting from the inevitability of **politics** in the process (116 comments in total).

- **Cautious acceptance in recognition of potential inefficiencies:**

There is a concern even among those supporting the proposal about additional bureaucracy and cost and associated **inefficiency**. (18 comments in total).

2.2.2 Codes (for)

From the comments provided by respondents who agreed with the proposal the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Intelligence (303)**

Benefits associated with the opportunity offered through the Deal to use local knowledge to make better decisions.

Norfolk will know what is best for people.

As a coastal and rural County Norfolk has a range of opportunities and challenges not always easily understood by those who don't live and work in the area.

Norfolk is too dissimilar to the major urban counties for Westminster to understand the county's needs and they are not interested enough to delve deeply to work them out.

Norfolk has unique geography - fenland, Broadland water, coastal, tidal areas, outstanding high grade farmland and forests -

unmatched by any other county. It is a unique environment best served by local knowledgeable people.

The County Council are perfectly placed to know where investment is needed most, and apply budgets accordingly.

- **Local (111)**

Understanding of the wider local context, landscape and democratic structures

Focus on local issues with decision making made locally should open up lots of opportunities, which may have been overlooked otherwise.

Autonomous responsibility is generally favourable.

The opportunity for decisions made about Norfolk, to be made in Norfolk, will (I feel) will be extremely beneficial to our county. I live and work in Norfolk, so our priorities here, may be different to elsewhere and to have a local oversight and say in how our money is spent, will only be a plus!

The more control devolved locally the better. In fact I believe this should trickle down to area councils and town and parish councils.

Norfolk has unique geography - fenland, Broadland water, coastal, tidal areas, outstanding high grade farmland and forests - unmatched by any other county. It is a unique environment best served by local knowledgeable people. It also has a predominately rural population with a unique demographic and balance of owner occupied housing. All this is best served by the local community.

- **Efficiency (87)**

The potential for the Deal to improve the efficiency of local spending

I believe removing layers of approval will enhance delivery and reduce costs. Hopefully Norfolk can deliver with existing management and will not see it as an opportunity to grow the organisation which will defeat the object.

I hope it might lead to a more entrepreneurial and dynamic approach. Although I hope the very important health and social needs of the people in Norfolk will be foremost, too.

This has the potential to cut the staff time spent bidding for money and allow us to direct resources to delivering for our residents.

Norfolk requires policy delivery based on a higher granularity of detail regarding the socio-economic needs and opportunities within and across our region – and the linkages and interdependencies

that can be proactively managed to ensure greater effectiveness and efficiency of public spending.

- **Transparency (71)**

Respondents are supportive of the proposals with the proviso that the potential for enhanced transparency around decision making and priority setting through democratic structures is in place.

This is a positive move but the money needs to be allocated for use prudently and within set requirements such as quality of provision and expected outcomes.

the money needs to be accountable for, not spent on useless things that don't help the locals

I agree in principle with Norfolk County Council have direct control over funding to meet the identified needs of Norfolk. We will need to monitor the progress of this arrangement.

Overall I agree but do have concerns about the checks and balances on how it will be spent.

- **Investment (63)**

The potential investment in the Deal provides an opportunity to enhance Norfolk, socially, environmentally and economically.

We need investment for Norfolk to grow our economy, support local businesses and enable young people to have a future where they live!

Norfolk is an amazing County and a wonderful place to live and totally deserves the opportunity to have control to develop and diversify the huge potential of our County by our people

It is vital that Norfolk takes advantage of this opportunity for devolved finances and powers, which do not come around often.

- **Finance (33)**

The financial settlement in the Deal, while, relatively small is in line with other areas and will provide flexibility for local leaders to make funding decisions that reflect local rather than national priorities.

It makes sense for local leaders to be able to have the funds to respond to local needs.

While a relatively small amount it compares to other areas.

- **Futureproof (25)**

The Deal offers the potential for Norfolk to take control of its future.

It is better to have local control over local spending. But how much will £30 million be worth in 10 never mind 30 years' time?

To provide Norfolk with long term funding - which allows strategic, long term planning.

- **Accountability (24)**

The Deal provides an opportunity for local people to have a direct involvement in decisions through local democratic arrangements.

If levelling Up in the wider sense is to work, it is important that powers be devolved down to local government. This is the first step to achieve this.

This deal allows local people to influence how funding is allocated.

- **Politics (21)**

There is balanced acceptance that the process will be driven by politics, and this will inevitably require some form of trade-off between local priorities and national direction.

The principle is good but slightly worried that the decisions on where it should be spent will become too political.

It will be very political and policies will be determined by the party who not all of us would accept

- **Inefficiency (18)**

Despite supporting the proposal, some respondents were concerned that it may create more layers of bureaucracy resulting in duplication and inefficiency.

I would not want to see additional staff diluting the effect of the investment though.

I agree so long as that doesn't result in additional elected and non-elected posts and offices being set up incurring salaries, pensions, NI and or expenses.

2.2.3 Reasons for Disagreeing

In descending order, the most frequently mentioned broad themes in opposition to the proposal were:

- **Norfolk County Council not best placed to deliver the Deal and inefficiency:**

There was a recurring reference to a perceived failings in the County Council, with many remarking on a poor track record of performance. This was coupled with a concern that the proposal would create more layers of bureaucracy resulting in duplication and inefficiency (155 comments in total).

- **Reservations concerning the overall financial settlement offered in the Deal:**

Respondents expressed the view that the proposed **finance** in the Deal seem large but in reality will not be enough to achieve anything significant for Norfolk. The proposed finances in the Deal are not **futureproofed** with no account made of inflation. Overall the proposed **investment** in the Deal was not felt to be worth it in terms of the money attracted to Norfolk (86 comments in total).

- **A reduction in democratic accountability:**

Respondents reported that an increasing lack of trust in **politics** in general made them less inclined to support the Deal. This made them reluctant to move away from accountability through national Government structures to devolved decision-making (58 comments in total).

- **A move towards local priorities at the expense of other areas in the County:**

Respondents felt that the **local** nature of the proposed arrangements could lead to favouritism in decision making. There were additional concerns that there would also be a focus on urban areas with decisions being '**too Norwich**' at the expense of other areas (28 comments in total).

- **Perceptions of bias towards positive decisions in the consultation:**

Concern was expressed about perceptions of bias in the consultation, with the view that leading questions were deployed and lack of 'downside' explanations (potential disadvantages or risks) would inevitably lead to supportive answers (15 comments).

2.2.3.1 Codes (against)

From the comments provided by respondents who disagreed with the proposal the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Record (87)**

There was a recurring reference to a perceived failings in the County Council, with many remarking on a poor track record of performance.

County Hall is a White Elephant eating up money because they can't make better use of the land due to the conditions of the land grant.

I have concerns because of the current governance of NCC and its internal culture which is defensive and unreflective in my experience.

I would be very concerned about NCC, as it currently operates, having any additional monies or powers without significant guarantees or restrictions in terms of oversight by other partner organisations.

- **Inefficiency (68)**

Respondents were concerned that the proposal would create more layers of bureaucracy resulting in duplication and inefficiency.

Another layer of folk doing little for high wages that have to be found through local taxes.

This will create yet more layers of bureaucracy and more opportunities for corruption than exist already..

Another layer of folk doing little for high wages that have to be found through local taxes.

- **Finance (52)**

Concern that the proposed finance in the deal seem large but in reality will not be enough.

Not enough money is being offered, the amount of funding will not cover all of the investment the County needs.

I am suspecting that this would result in the Government passing down responsibility and costs which may result in higher Council Tax bills. The County has a deficit now, which is either happened as a result of inefficient Council spending budget or that there was not enough released from the Government to cover costs. I would suggest, logically it has to be one or the other. This would only be worse with devolution.

- **Politics (52)**

An increasing lack of trust in politics in general among respondents made them less inclined to support the Deal

We have essentially a two party political decision making system in this country and I can't see how local politics will be kept out of county decision making, instead of the right business decisions being made. Having another pot of money to play with politically is tempting but needs to be moderated in some way. There needs to be more frequent accountability of the spend, than every five years as planned by the government.

I do not believe that a directly elected Tory leader voted in by a predominantly Tory electorate will help levelling-up in Norfolk.

- **Futureproof (29)**

The proposed finances in the Deal are not futureproofed with no account made of inflation.

If there is no inflation linked element to the funding then this deal is there is signing up a whole generation of our county to live in poverty for 30 years with no way out.

£20m in 30 years will be worth less than £5m in today's terms if inflation remains at 10%, perhaps it will be enough to buy a two bedroom house.

- **Local (20)**

Respondents felt that the local nature of the proposed arrangements could lead to favouritism in decision making.

Didn't NCC vote against Regional Government in the 90's?

Would prefer local residents identify essential projects, then council cost and apply for money.

- **Consultation (15)**

Concern was expressed about perceptions of bias in the consultation, with leading questions and lack of explanations of potential disadvantages or risks.

Also, where are the downsides? Give me the downsides too rather than trying to sell us on the benefits alone - what are you hiding?

Absolutely no explanation of the substance of the changes has been given - no specifics or examples have been given.

- **'Too Norwich' (8)**

Concern that the focus will be on Norwich at the expense of other areas.

As I see things any funding from central government will stay in the city as normal and the rest of the county will not benefit especially North Norfolk.

Very concerned that money will be distributed to Norwich and surrounding areas. West Norfolk is at the bottom of the list when funds are distributed. Ask folk and my perception will be confirmed.

- **Accountability (6)**

Respondents' reluctance to move away from accountability through national Government.

I think we need a national policy and not local ones. Local ones tend to focus on the needs of a small area and not see the whole picture.

I want Norfolk to adhere to National Standards.

- **Investment (5)**

Overall, the Deal was not felt to be worth it in terms of the money attracted to Norfolk.

This is a very poor financial settlement and I do not believe that this government can commit future ones for 30 years. Therefore, the deal has to be viewed as what is promised and can be delivered. This reduces the figure to £35m - much of which will

be swallowed up in reorganisation costs. Whoever negotiated this needs to be retired and someone else come in and make a better job.

Not enough money is being offered, the amount of funding will not cover all of the investment the County needs.

2.2.4 Reasons Unsure (neither agree nor disagree)

In descending order of mentions, the broad themes from those respondents who were unsure whether to support or oppose the proposal were:

- **Concerns over current delivery and future transparency**
Respondents reported concerns over the perceived effectiveness of the county council current track **record** and whether it can be trusted with new duties. Lack of trust that NCC can deliver, with a need for **transparency** in decision-making to reassure respondents (38 comments in total).
- **Is the potential investment in Norfolk's future sufficient to justify accepting the Deal:**
Respondents were concerned that the **finance** settlement contained in the Deal may not be enough to achieve any significant change for Norfolk, alongside concerns that this was not **futureproofed** by not factoring in any consideration of the impact of inflation. However, respondents were open to persuasion around the opportunity for local **investment** (31 comments in total).
- **The potential of becoming entangled in politics and bureaucracy:**
Respondents were wary around the implications of **politics** in the Deal, specifically the perceived negative impact of increased politicisation of decision making. There were also concerns expressed around the potential to increase **inefficiency** through additional bureaucracy and layers of decision making which were seen as a diversion of resources (19 comments in total).
- **The consultation itself:**
Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the **consultation** questions were reported as a reason for uncertainty over whether to support or oppose the proposal (12 comments).
- **The need to demonstrate local intelligence not fully met:**
Respondents were not convinced the Deal reflected an **intelligence** based full understanding of the **local** context, landscape and democratic structures. (9 comments in total).

2.2.4.1 Codes (unsure)

From the comments provided by respondents who were unsure about the proposal the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Record (22)**

Concerns over the effectiveness of the county council in discharging their current responsibilities and whether it can be trusted with new responsibilities.

I'm not convinced that the County Council is competent enough to manage an even larger budget.

I'm not sure that I understand what it means for Norfolk. I like the thought of more money coming into Norfolk but worry that we don't have the expertise locally to manage it effectively.

- **Transparency (16)**

Lack of trust that Norfolk County Council will provide clear and transparent decision-making.

This will either be the best thing since sliced bread or an unmitigated disaster.

Norfolk County Council does not manage resources well currently. There would need to be very clear transparency for the public and accountability for how money is spent.

- **Finance (14)**

Questions about whether the financial settlement is enough:

The amount of devolved funding agreed sounds insignificant to me given the total current NCC budget.

The amounts are trifling and the deal is very unlikely to last more than a few years - certainly not 30!

- **Futureproofing (14)**

Concerns about inflation/whether the current deal is futureproofed:

In principle agree however if in the event of a change of politics leadership nationally but not locally, will Norfolk in its decision making reflect the priorities of the newly elected government?

Annual sum is barely % of the overall NCC budget and is not indexed link so ultimately will become valueless.

- **Consultation (12)**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions:

The presentation does not take into account the views of those who oppose the "deal" and to provide our "elected leader" with more select powers over the Cabinet whose views and approach I disagree with is pushing democratic actions even further away from our elected Councillors.

Strongly disagree under these circumstances. This is a one-sided question and totally biased...

- **Politics (12)**

The perceived negative impact of increased politicisation of decision making:

In principal it sounds positive.....however there will be a "pay off" for this to government in some form which may not yet be apparent.

Trust in what national or local politicians say is probably at an all-time low. Can we trust that they will deliver this without upsetting the population of Norfolk, or without destroying the ruralness of our beautiful county?

- **Inefficiency (7)**

Increased bureaucracy and added layers of decision-making seen as a diversion of resources:

I am for the proposal in principal but I can't help thinking it will cost a lot more money to put into place - more money on the Council Tax. Another layer of bureaucracy.

The money us fine but will be wasted on a new high paid job.

- **Intelligence (5)**

The need to clearly demonstrate the benefits of local evidence, local knowledge and context:

It is important that money is focused where it is needed in the long term and not to combat short term issues.

Norfolk must have a detailed plan to spend the money without using it to fund new employees and divert to other causes.

- **Local (4)**

A strong statement and demonstration of understanding of the unique local context, landscape and democratic structures needed to convince respondents of the benefits of the Deal.

I agree with the base assumption that local communities are better placed to know what they want from government funding.

- **Investment (3)**

Opportunity for money to be invested locally:

Depends on how the money is spent and how expenditure is controlled. We need proper investment as described to bring prosperity to the county without destroying the rural and agricultural heritage.

3 LOCAL BUSINESS VOICE FOR NORFOLK

Respondents were asked to provide their response to the question:

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

The analysis of the open and closed elements of this question are set out below.

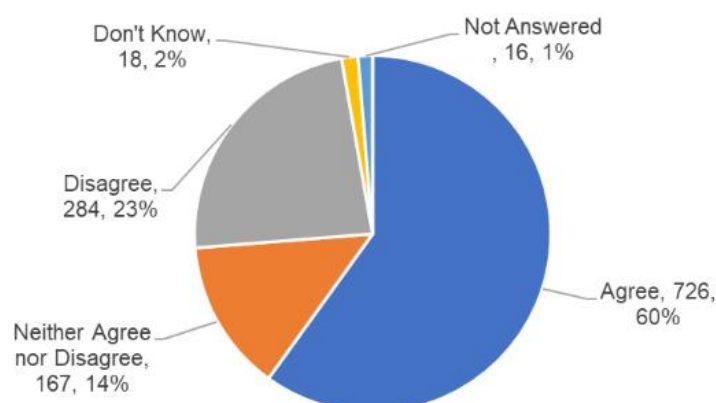
3.1 Quantitative (Closed) Responses

Respondents provided their response against a closed rating scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree.

When the results were analysed the majority of respondents were in agreement with the proposal as seen below:

- The majority (60%) agreed with the proposal (25% strongly agree and 35% agree)
- Around a quarter (23%) disagreed (13% strongly disagree and 10% disagree)
- Just over a tenth (14%) were unsure (neither agree nor disagree)
- A small number (2%) did not know
- The remainder (1%) did not answer the question.

Response	No.	%
Agree	726	60%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	167	14%
Disagree	284	23%
Don't Know	18	2%
Not Answered	16	1%
Total	1,211	100%⁴



3.2 Qualitative (Open) Responses

Having provided their responses to the closed questions respondents were then asked to provide a free text reason for their response.

Responses to the prompt ***“Why do you say that?”*** were analysed and grouped thematically around reasons for support, opposition or being unsure, as shown below.

NB: When reporting the themes we present the codes (tags) in **bold text** as they are recorded in the system and reported in detail in section 3.2.2.

⁴ Rounding has been applied

3.2.1 Reasons for Agreeing

In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in support of the proposal were:

- **The opportunity to provide voice for local Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) SME businesses in decisions:**

Respondents saw the Deal as providing an opportunity for the direction of business support by agencies with an in-depth understanding of the **local** context. At the same time providing the opportunity for local **SME** businesses to have a direct say in those support arrangements and to have a voice in decisions (239 comments in total).

- **The opportunity for enhanced accountability and coordination:**

The Deal provides the opportunity for local businesses to have a direct say in the business support arrangements overcoming perceptions that the current situation reduce or remove **accountability**. Alongside this, the Deal provides the prospect of **coordination** of the needs of business with the needs of other service areas (122 comments in total).

- **Providing a clear local focus of business support:**

The proposal provides a clear focus on the county of **Norfolk** without distraction from Suffolk which has a different economic/entrepreneurial make-up while recognising the importance of **regional** working (57 comments in total).

- **Providing extra resource for business support in Norfolk:**

While it was accepted that existing resources are insufficient to address the business support needs for the county there were doubts that enough funding was being offered in the Deal to address this (18 comments).

- A recognition that the current business support arrangements could be better: The view was that the **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) works** and, though the current arrangements are successful, they can be further built on under the Deal (8 comments).

3.2.1.1 Codes (for)

From the comments provided by respondents who agreed with the proposal, the ten most frequently codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Local (166)**

Respondents supported the overall proposed direction of business support by local agencies with an in-depth understanding of the local context contained in the Deal.

For Norfolk by Norfolk

Local decisions based on locally driven policies, created by local priorities.

Great! I hope this will be led by local businessmen.

Local businesses should be able to target the needs and aspirations of their local community.

- **Co-ordination (80)**

Opportunity to coordinate the needs of business with the needs of other service areas:

Less so about the 'business voice' than about co-ordinating new enterprises with training, recruitment and community needs

Co-ordinated approach with clearly agreed priorities and objectives will deliver better outcomes.

I like the idea of coordination.

- **Voice (52)**

Opportunity for local business to have a voice in decisions:

Norfolk needs to hear and support Norfolk's business community - and help steer development to meet future needs and away from some current areas.

It will make government take notice of Norfolk more

- **Norfolk (41)**

Focus on the county of Norfolk without distraction from Suffolk:

Norfolk has a vastly different economy to Suffolk, with the former being more of a producer economy and the second being higher value added. It is important that Norfolk's business voice is unified and can make its points collectively. With different challenges and context, Norfolk will need different solutions to Suffolk.

The current LEP, shared with Suffolk, is too diffused to answer the economic needs of the County. It is increasingly important that economic growth is viewed holistically, across multiple service areas (education; adult education; transport; environment), rather than siloed.

- **Accountability (28)**

The Deal provides the opportunity for local businesses to have a direct say in the support arrangements.

It creates a 'local' voice for businesses and to have more accountability

I agree 100% businesses should be involved in decision making for the county

- **Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) (21)**

Opportunity for SMEs to be heard and for their needs to be met.

Small businesses need a voice.

The LEP has little interest in small businesses where Norfolk County Council has.

- **Resources (18)**

The funding doesn't seem enough, but the existing resources are not sufficient for the challenge:

Your "track record" for assisting local businesses, creating local employment, speaks for itself. With more funding this should lead to even better employment opportunities in the area of Norfolk.

However, the funding is totally insufficient.

- **Regional (16)**

Recognition of the benefits of working at a wider geographic scale than Norfolk:

There are strengths to current New Anglia LEP arrangements which allow cross-working with colleagues in Suffolk and promotes strong relationships in certain areas between NCC and SCC. While a stronger business voice for Norfolk would be welcome, it should not come at the detriment of working together with Suffolk.

Would allow a concentration on Norfolk, but still have the ability to work in partnership across a wider area.

- **No accountability (14)**

The proposals provide the opportunity to overcome the current arrangements that are felt to reduce or remove accountability to others:

The current LEP, shared with Suffolk, is too diffused to answer the economic needs of the County. It is increasingly important that economic growth is viewed holistically, across multiple service areas (education; adult education; transport; environment), rather than siloed.

The New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is a non-statutory body which has no democratic mandate. This should be brought under the democratic control of the people of Norfolk and Suffolk.

- **LEP works (8)**

The current arrangements are successful and can be further built on under the Deal.

I like the work the LEP have previously done. They have great local business knowledge on their board.

A stronger business voice for Norfolk is necessary but it does not need a devolution agreement to achieve this. Just bring the LEP into County Council control.

3.2.2 Reasons for Disagreeing

In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in opposition to the proposal were:

- **Change seems needless and lacking adequate financial support:**
Proposals seen as a **waste** of resources when the current **LEP works** and the arrangements are successful. Alongside this sat respondents' concerns over the extent to which resources being made available under the deal were sufficient to meet Norfolk's business support requirements (98 comments in total).
- **The proposed arrangements reduce accountability and independence:**
The proposals in the Deal appear to reduce/remove accountability. This was felt to be exacerbated by removing the **independence** of the current arrangements in which the non-politicised decision-making of the LEP is seen as a significant benefit to the county (84 comments in total).
- **Focusing business support solely on Norfolk ignores the wider regional and national opportunities:**
Norfolk is **too small** an area to deal effectively with issues currently dealt with on a wider scale. The proposal fails to recognise of the benefits of working at a wider geographic, **regional**, scale than Norfolk (37 comments in total).
- **Overlooking the benefits of local coordination:**
The proposal appears to overlook both the opportunity for coordination of the needs of business with the needs of other service areas and the direction of business support by local agencies with an in-depth understanding of the **local** context (18 comments in total).
- **Consultation:**
Respondents expressed reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (14 comments in total).

3.2.2.1 Codes (against)

From the comments provided by respondents who disagreed with the proposal, the ten most frequently mentioned codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **No accountability (67)**

The proposals in the Deal reduce/remove accountability to others:

Any business board needs to be independent and not part of the Council. The LEP is merely being sucked into NCC with no thought as to whether this is the best model. You have not yet announced what this board will look like and how it will operate.

Giving all the LEP powers to NCC is centralization, not devolution.

The LEP and TEP are names that have been around for a few years now. They don't seem to have any impact on many of the residents, it's a group of people sitting round a table but no actions.

- **Waste (57)**

Proposals seen as a waste of resources

NCC couldn't run a pub in a brewery. Also creating new boards means more quangos and wasted money.

Waste of more public money

It's not broken. The LEP seems to be operating well. This move will strip funding from a nimble delivery organisation and create another lethargic County department.

- **LEP works (26)**

The current arrangements are successful:

The LEP functions well and is independent of the local politics. It is also better that it is cross county as business is not based on county borders.

The LEP runs fine without interference from NCC - I think businesses would be worse off than better off. Business people know how to run businesses properly - councils are terrible business people.

- **Too small (19)**

Norfolk is too small an area to deal effectively with issues currently dealt with on a wider scale

You are selling this as a means to be Norfolk centric but the economies of scale of working with Suffolk will be lost.

If there is an existing board for Norfolk and Suffolk, I don't see the value of changing it just to Norfolk. Collaboration with projects in Suffolk might be harmed.

- **Regional (18)**

Respondents were not convinced that the proposal recognised the benefits of working at a wider geographic scale than Norfolk, with the need for regional and national action largely overlooked:

Not sure that having Norfolk and Suffolk competing to host business is a great idea.

I believe that there is still a role for LEP outside of county, it is far bigger than county and local government.

- **Independence (17)**

The non-politicised decision-making of the LEP is a benefit.

I'm concerned that in absorbing the LEP its independence and strong business voice will be lost and that will be to the detriment of the community.

The LEP is an independent organisation which should be free from political influence. That would not be the case under these proposals.

- **Resources (15)**

Concerns over the resources made available under the Deal - will they be enough/new/available?

There is no ability of £20m (which will be worth £18m next year) to reassure me that any actions taken will meet the stated aims - this needs a political move of agenda at the centre rather than splitting it up. We are going to be affected by the actions of others and still not have sufficient funding to actually counter that.

How will you staff this? Who will do the work required? Do your staff have the right skills to deliver this?

- **Consultation (14)**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions:

Give us both sides of this rather than the sunlit uplands.

These questions are all loaded. So that everyone says Strongly Agree. I thought you wanted our opinions not to ask loaded questions.

- **Coordination (9)**

Opportunity to coordinate the needs of business with the needs of other service areas:

The idea that the council can be an effective voice for business simply doesn't pass any critical analysis. Business is culturally fundamentally different, it is orientated towards getting things done, overcoming problems; the council is obsessed with gathering data and creating audit trails that tend to slow down the entrepreneurial journey.

Most businesses/employers are national or international e.g. Aviva, NHS. It is these we need to work with in a joined up way.

- **Local (9)**

The direction of business support by local agencies with an in-depth understanding of the local context:

A business voice should come from business, not be imposed from above.

I do not believe local government have the knowledge or expertise to understand current, let alone, future business needs. Local government is generally seen as a blocker to progress and an organisation with too much internal red tape, its slow to change, top heavy, jobs/roles that add no real value...and the big one: doesn't seem able to manage its own business as a business: wasting money, slow to deliver, not meeting customer expectation... etc etc hardly a business other businesses would look to work with.

3.2.3 Reasons Unsure (neither agree nor disagree)

In descending order of mentions, the broad themes from those respondents who were unsure whether to support or oppose the proposal were:

- **Change seems needless with the potential to reduce accountability**

The proposals in the Deal reduce/remove accountability (**no accountability**) and are seen as a **waste** of resources, reducing the perceived benefit of the **independence** in current arrangement through the non-politicised decision-making of the LEP (31 comments in total).

- **Not convinced business interests are being fully considered**

The proposals do not clearly set out the way in which the direction of business support by **local** agencies understanding the **local** context is to be met and **coordinate** the needs of business with the needs of other service areas. Neither does it provide a convincing argument that **SMEs** will be heard and their needs met or the wider opportunity for local business to have a **voice** in decisions (21 comments in total).

- **Focusing business support solely on Norfolk ignores the wider regional and national opportunities:**

Norfolk is **too small** an area to deal effectively with issues currently dealt with on a wider scale. The proposal fails to recognise the benefits of working at a wider geographic, **regional**, scale than Norfolk (21 comments in total)

- **Consultation**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (9 comments).

1.1.1.1 Codes (unsure)

From the comments provided by respondents who were unsure, the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **No accountability (17)**

The proposals in the Deal reduce/remove accountability:

That is because at this stage the proposed structures, roles and powers of the Norfolk Business Board have yet to be determined.

It is unclear how and when the board will be appointed and because of this I am not sure if it will be a success. There needs to be transparency about how members are elected to the board, how they can be removed etc.

- **Regional (12)**

Recognition of the benefits of working at a wider geographic scale than Norfolk:

I'm not convinced that separation from Suffolk on this is essential. A joined up approach may be more successful and sustainable.

Not sure having a Norfolk-specific LEP as opposed to a Norfolk & Suffolk LEP will make a great deal of difference.

- **Consultation (9)**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions:

these questions are worded to get the result you wish, of course we want control, of course we want more money per head. but not the way this proposal is put together

This is the first of numerous loaded questions in this questionnaire. Who would disagree about the need for a "stronger local business voice" on some matters, but it is far from established that these proposals would deliver this.

- **Too small (9)**

Norfolk is too small an area to deal effectively with issues currently dealt with on a wider scale.

it is sometimes best to work with others especially in development even if out of county

Are the needs of Norfolk that different from Suffolk? Perhaps it is better to look at these two counties together. Would the NCC be better placed than the LEP as an independent body to drive enterprise?

- **Co-ordination (8)**

Opportunity to coordinate the needs of business with the needs of other service areas:

A stronger local business voice could be a force for good but there is a need to balance that with a strong democratic voice so that local people are involved in decisions where they live rather than being told what they should, or even must, have.

It depends who articulates that voice - we need some new ideas and passion for what works for us in today's world.

- **Waste (8)**

Proposals seen as a waste of resources:

It's a QANGO. Many meetings, many staff, many reports, much money wasted.

This can be done through the existing framework.

- **Independence (6)**

The non-politicised decision-making of the LEP is a benefit.

I think the LEP should remain independent but be listened to and collaborated with not it's functionality subsumed into public service operations.

I think business leaders need to have an independent structure/mechanism to be able to hold leaders to account but not to the extent that public expectations are ignored. Will this set up enable transparency and the avoidance of undue influence?

- **Local (5)**

The direction of business support by local agencies with an in depth understanding of the local context:

Greater knowledge of local needs - but need to beware of nepotism

As we can see from central government politicians don't understand business. I can't see a good outcome bringing the LEP under the control of an inefficient NCC.

- **Small and Medium Sized Enterprise (SME) (4)**

Opportunity for SMEs to be heard and for their needs to be met:

If it includes local, independent, small businesses then yes, but, if it continues to be run by the public sector and large businesses, it will be of little use to the local economy.

If this happens it must be remembered that there are numerous very small businesses in Norfolk and these need to be part of this deal as well.

- **Voice (4)**

Opportunity for local business to have a voice in decisions:

Concerned that suggests Norfolk does not have a strong voice at present. Why not?

A stronger local business voice could be a force for good but there is a need to balance that with a strong democratic voice so that local people are involved in decisions where they live rather than being told what they should, or even must, have.

4 ADULT EDUCATION

Respondents were asked to provide their response to the question:

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

The analysis of the open and closed elements of this question are set out below.

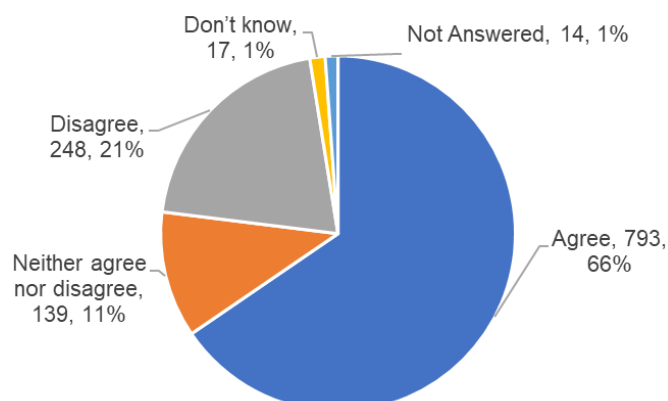
4.1 Quantitative (Closed) Responses

Respondents provided their response against a closed rating scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree.

When the results were analysed the majority of respondents were in agreement with the proposal as seen below:

- The majority (65%) agreed with the proposal (33% strongly agreed and 32% agreed)
- Less than a quarter (21%) disagreed (12% strongly disagreed 9% disagreed)
- Just under 11% were unsure
- 1% did not know
- The remainder (1%) did not answer.

Response	No.	%
Agree	793	65%
Neither agree nor disagree	139	11%
Disagree	248	21%
Don't know	17	1%
Not Answered	14	1%
Total	1,211	100%



4.2 Qualitative (Open) Responses

Having provided their responses to the closed questions respondents were then asked to provide a free text reason for their response.

Responses to the prompt **“Why do you say that?”** were analysed and grouped thematically around reasons for support, opposition or being unsure, as shown below.

NB: When reporting the themes we present the codes (tags) in **bold text** as they are recorded in the system and reported in detail in section 4.2.2.

4.2.1 Reasons for Agreeing

In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in support of the proposal were:

- **Local intelligence leading to improved delivery:**
The proposed Deal offers the potential to base delivery on understanding of the unique **local** context, landscape and democratic structures based on **intelligence** of what is required (317 comments in total).
- **Resources on offer:**
The proposal brings in resources to deliver adult education that would otherwise not have been available (52 comments in total).
- **Future performance based on the past**
Norfolk has a strong track record of delivering effective adult education in the past leading to confidence in the potential to deliver the requirements of the Deal (37 comments in total).

4.2.1.1 Codes (for)

From the comments provided by respondents who agreed with the proposal the most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Intelligence (259)**

Local knowledge about what is required:

NCC will have a clearer view of the skills needs of Norfolk industry, so can target funding in adult education to the skills needed. Funding can be used specifically to meet local skills gap. NCC must ensure it liaises closely with businesses to ensure the accuracy of skills gaps in our area - and support businesses to provide the adult training needed.

Hopefully will enable training and learning to be more targeted at what is needed in Norfolk and where it is needed most in Norfolk.

Having funding located within NCC will allow money to be tailored to the local workforce needs.

Norfolk has a unique population, with a higher than average age group so needs to be focused on the needs of Adult students. So, by having the ability to spend the education budget to suit our needs can only help those adults that require education not matter what their age group is.

The proposal will give NCC the flexibility to fund skills and qualifications that meet the needs of employers in Norfolk

- **Local (58)**

A strong statement and demonstration of understanding of the unique local context, landscape and democratic structures needed to convince respondents of the benefits of the Deal:

We know best what skills we need to serve and grow key local industries.

Again, local people know what skills they require and need this to be a priority for them in their area.

Local decision making will be more effective than central government.

- **Resources (51)**

Will the resources be made available for devolution plans to make a difference.

We would be able to spend funds on where Adult education most suits the needs of Norfolk residents, rather than via a proscribed list from Whitehall.

It would boost adult skills in the area adding significant value to our workforce, becoming an attractive area for businesses to grow or move to Norfolk from outside the county.

I agree but there are important issues. How will the value of the budget be protected in future years (index-linking). I've seen delegations like this lead to much lower budgets in within a few years

- **Record (37)**

Concerns over the effectiveness of the county council with current responsibilities and whether it can be trusted with new responsibilities.

Adult Education is hugely successful in Norfolk and we know our learners far better than central government. We know the skills needs, the lifestyles and barriers that have to be navigated for our learners to succeed and we have the local knowledge to effectively implement sound, reasoned planning.

Norfolk County Council has a very strong adult learning provision. With very good examples of how available funding has been utilised to support apprenticeships, developing digital skills, and other provision such as the Norfolk Care Academy.

4.2.2 Reasons for Disagreeing

In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in opposition to the proposal were:

- **Poor performance and overlooking local intelligence:**
Concerns over the effectiveness of the county council's current track **record** and the extent to which it can be trusted with new responsibilities, coupled with the view that the proposal does not maximise local **intelligence** about what is required (104 comments in total).
- **Inadequate resources on offer:**
Respondents expressed concern that the financial **resources** on offer in the Deal were inadequate to meet the overall adult education needs of Norfolk (40 comments in total).
- **Consultation concerns:**
Respondents expressed concern over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (12 comments in total).

4.2.2.1 Codes (against)

From the comments provided by respondents who disagreed with the proposal the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Record (97)**
Concerns over the effectiveness of the county council with current responsibilities and whether it can be trusted with new responsibilities:

Norfolk's record on Adult Education is dismal. Nothing about giving the NCC more control gives me confidence.

NCC cannot manage AEBs currently. How will they with more money?

Norfolk's record on education is not good

I don't see how the council will suddenly do a better job with devolution.

- **Resources (40)**
Will the resources be made available for devolution plans to make a difference?

*The budget is and will be far too small to shift anything considerably.
The move towards the Norfolk council doesn't change that.*

The government should pay for all education. Skilled people are a national asset. The government have run down and underfunded

adult education for years. So you can pick up a failing underfunding service. Are you nuts!

- **Consultation (12)**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions:

These questions are loaded, giving any sort of negative answer is difficult.

Your questions are completely misleading. 'Have the money for adult ed and can decide locally' - you have clearly already decided!

- **Intelligence (7)**

Local knowledge about what is required

We have a perfectly good post 16 sector called Further Education. Councils have no place providing much that already exists. Instead, why not transfer the Adult Ed budget to Norfolk FE establishments instead of reinventing the wheel?

Adult Education is not just about providing skills for jobs that don't exist. Prioritising job skills over leisure skills and enrichment has brought Adult Education in Norfolk, that once was excellent to a useless organisation that serves no one.

4.2.3 Reasons Unsure (neither agree nor disagree)

In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes from those respondents who were unsure whether to support or oppose the proposal were:

- **Poor performance and overlooking local intelligence:**

Respondents were unsure whether to agree or disagree with the proposal as a result of a lack of clarity of the effectiveness of the county council's current track **record** and the extent to which it can be trusted with new responsibilities, coupled with the view that the proposal does not maximise local **intelligence** about what is required (44 comments in total).

- **Inadequate resources on offer:**

Respondents expressed concern that the financial **resources** on offer in the Deal might be inadequate to meet the overall adult education needs of Norfolk (17 comments in total).

4.2.3.1 Codes (unsure)

From the comments provided by respondents who were unsure about the proposals, the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Record (32)**

Concerns over the effectiveness of the county council with current responsibilities and whether it can be trusted with new responsibilities:

A transfer of responsibility for Adult Education does not guarantee it will be better or worse. Training skills just for Norfolk might inhibit job mobility if these skills are not required elsewhere. Does the County Council feel it can do a better job than central government?

Norfolk County Council has a poor record in all education funding and fairness in distribution of funds. There must be safeguarding to ensure equal benefits in allocation.

- **Resources (17)**

Will the resources be made available for devolution plans to make a difference?

The whole country needs upskilling and I think education and training is vital to our future. I don't see how chopping up the same budget and adding layer upon layer of bureaucracy helps. Why does it have to be a competition?

Unclear if there is a benefit in doing so. Presumably NCC would have more knowledge about targeting funding, but in what way does this differ from the current set up?

- **Intelligence (12)**

Local knowledge about what is required:

Adult education has been very poor and limited in scope over the last 25 years and needs to change. If local control brings about change that must be good.

Adult Education needs are a national priority and there are risks to localising this. It will depend on how data and intelligence is shared as well as access to high quality resources to deliver an effective programme of adult ed.

5 HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT

Respondents were asked to provide their response to the question:

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

The analysis of the open and closed elements of this question are set out below.

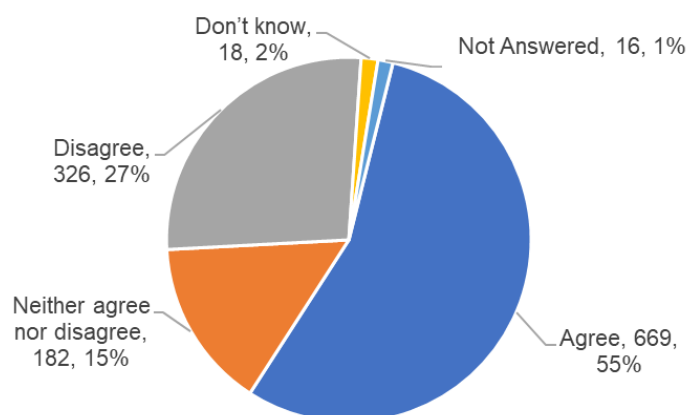
5.1 Quantitative (Closed) Responses

Respondents provided their response against a closed rating scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree.

When the results were analysed the majority of respondents were in agreement with the proposal as seen below:

- The majority (55%) agreed with the proposal (24% strongly agree and 31% agree)
- Just over a quarter (27%) disagreed (17% strongly disagree and 10% disagree)
- 15% were unsure (neither agree nor disagree)
- 2% did not know
- The remainder (1%) did not provide a response.

Response	No.	%
Agree	669	55%
Neither agree nor disagree	182	15%
Disagree	326	27%
Don't know	18	2%
Not Answered	16	1%
Total	1,211	100%



5.2 Qualitative (Open) Responses

Having provided their responses to the closed questions respondents were then asked to provide a free text reason for their response.

Responses to the prompt ***“Why do you say that?”*** were analysed and grouped thematically around reasons for support, opposition or being unsure, as shown below.

NB: When reporting the themes we present the codes (tags) in **bold text** as they are recorded in the system and reported in detail in section 5.2.2.

5.2.1 Reasons for Agreeing

- **Development to address need:**

The proposal was felt to meet the requirement to provide **affordable** housing for all to meet the county's needs, addressing concern about the need to control housing to prevent an increase in **second home** ownership rather than for those who need it most, particularly in respect of new developments. The Deal was also felt to provide the opportunity to develop all required **infrastructure** to meet identifiable **need** both in housing and employment sites (304 comments in total).

- **Ensuring development protects the Norfolk environment:**

The proposal was viewed favourably due to the approach of using existing/**brownfield** sites in built up areas rather than open countryside; protecting agricultural (**farm**) land from development; and the use of suitable sites to protect the local environment (175 comments in total).

- **Local intelligence leading to appropriate development:**

The proposal offers a focus on local needs based on understanding of the local context and an **intelligence**-led approach based on local knowledge about the specifics of the area (82 comments in total).

- **Additional resources:**

Recognition that the Deal brings in additional resources to Norfolk despite concerns over the ability of the resources in the Deal to meet development targets (18 comments).

5.2.1.1 Codes (for)

From the comments provided by respondents who agreed with the proposal, the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Affordable (154)**

The need to provide affordable housing for all to meet the county's needs:

Affordable housing should be a priority, but there needs to be restrictive covenants on resale in perpetuity. If that were enforceable, I would be happy to have one on my property.

More affordable housing is essential to keep young families in the county.

First time housing is very limited in Norfolk, providing more affordable housing (especially in the current financial climate we are in) would encourage people to stay.

It is obvious that Norfolk needs more and much better suitable housing for local people. I worry that affordable housing means

cheap, badly designed houses which will be unsustainable as well as unattractive to look at and horrible to live in. Just look at the quality of the housing being put up for middle ranking families by the big developers. Building seriously good new affordable homes ought to be an opportunity to enhance Norfolk's towns, villages and countryside not litter the county with red-brick boxes as is currently being allowed to happen.

- **Brownfield (90)**

Using existing/brownfield sites in built up areas rather than open countryside:

It is essential brownfield sites are identified and used and that infrastructure is developed to support this new housing.

Brownfield sites first absolutely - BUT any land owned by us (i.e. district or council) must be used for social housing.

Brownfield sites should rightly be used for housing, and affordable housing is needed. More building on greenfield sites (what has happened in Swaffham is atrocious) I will never agree to.

If it is truly brownfield sites that are to be developed I am in total agreement. We are seeing masses of building on green land and farmland currently.

- **Infrastructure (66)**

Identified need to ensure all supporting infrastructure is in place prior to building:

Improving the infrastructure along with housing is a must. GP practices, schools and local high quality jobs.

infrastructure must be built alongside it, close by, in walking distance.

We can't keep building estates with no shops and encouraging more and more cars to do journeys that are unnecessary. THIS HAS TO STOP.

- **Suitable (66)**

The use of suitable sites to protect the local environment:

Providing affordable housing is a priority. However, the environmental impact on the surrounding countryside areas are also a priority i.e.: wildlife and conservation areas.

As long as the employment sites are sensibly located with easy access by foot bicycle or regular bus services to allow employees a twenty minute or less journey to work from a home area that offers a range of properties to suit all family sizes and budgets.

We need to have a say in determining that development happens in a way that is supported by local communities, and new housing developments are targeted towards local people and on brown field sites, not tearing up more green field sites as is now happening

- **Need (55)**

Development to meet identifiable need(s):

First time housing is very limited in Norfolk, providing more affordable housing (especially in the current financial climate we are in) would encourage people to stay. More jobs would also do this.

Employment sites for the younger generation would be a good step forward.

- **Local (53)**

Focus on local needs based on understanding of the local context:

There is a real need for new housing and employment opportunities. Locally we know where this is needed, rather than being directed to have it where government think it is needed.

Anything that would make the process less cumbersome, more timely and less prohibitively costly would be a bonus to those who have sites they put forward to develop to provide the much needed housing and employment.

- **Intelligence (29)**

Local knowledge about the specifics of the area

I believe it is essential that local communities have a say in where developments take place and that building on green sites is avoided. More local control on developments is welcome, provided environmental concerns and local communities are heard.

Norfolk are aware of the need for decent affordable housing and where these needs to be.

- **Second homes (29)**

Concern about housing development to increase second home ownership, particularly in respect of buying up new developments:

make homes for local people and not have too many second homes which are abandoned in the winter and protect wildlife areas instead of development of second homes for outsiders

In an area such as I live in the second home market has immensely reduced the opportunity for local people and workers to live in the villages or coastal places near their work. Dedicated housing for

local people or workers, with a covenant so that it can only be used as such is very necessary.

- **Farm (19)**

Protection of agricultural land from development

Brownfield sites yes but not agricultural land

Too many large national developers are building large estates on good agricultural land rather than small local developments in villages for local people.

- **Resources (18)**

Concerns over the ability of the resources in the Deal to meet development targets

It makes sense but the sums involved are very small in comparison to the challenge. How will it be guaranteed that the new homes created will be for local people?

Whilst I would like to strongly agree with this statement the paltry sum allocated to this is disappointing.

5.2.2 Reasons for Disagreeing

In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in opposition to the proposal were:

- **Potential failure to consider Norfolk's future sustainability:**

Respondents were concerned that the proposal failed to take account of the overall need to use **brownfield** sites, particularly in existing urban settings leading to housing and employment sites that are not **suitable**. This included concerns over the impact of lack of consideration of **infrastructure** demand on economic, social and environmental **sustainability** (115 comments in total).

- **Affordable before second homes:**

Concern that the proposal lacked focus on **affordable** housing for local people and failed to address the issues of **second homes** (69 comments in total).

- **Potential failure to meet local need:**

Concern was expressed over a lack of focus on **local** understanding of the local context leading to development that fails to meet identifiable **need(s)** (45 comments in total).

- **Excessive centralisation leading to the loss of local context and understanding:**

Concerns over the potential of **centralisation** of all planning authority roles within the County Council removing local knowledge held by District Councils (34 comments).

- **Inadequate resources:**

The **resources** in the proposed financial settlement were not felt to be sufficient to meet the development targets in the Deal (39 comments in total).

5.2.2.1 Codes (against)

From the comments provided by respondents who disagree with the proposal the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Suitable (60)**

The use of suitable sites to protect the local environment:

More urban development on green fields and open spaces is a completely wrong strategy. There are thousands of empty premises both commercial and residential in the county. They should be utilised and if Landlords won't upkeep them then compulsory purchase them.

All we are seeing is inappropriate developments in inappropriate locations, without the necessary transport links e.g. Scottow, a big white elephant that those that run it manufacture inaccurate statistics to justify the way of millions on this site. Where is the strategy, there isn't one that is appropriate to any site.

Too many houses are being built in villages affecting current residents. More use should be made of existing unused buildings and DO NOT build more!

- **Infrastructure (52)**

Identified need to ensure all supporting infrastructure is in place prior to building:

There is too much rural development without investment in services, utilities or other infrastructure. Focus on supporting existing villages first, e.g. get better broadband for all not just a select few, and supporting small businesses such as village shops and pubs as before long these will just disappear.

We've too many houses already and no infrastructure, ruining our villages and market towns.

There is too much rural development without investment in services, utilities or other infrastructure. Focus on supporting existing villages first, e.g. get better broadband for all not just a select few, and supporting small businesses such as village shops and pubs as before long these will just disappear

- **Affordable (49)**

The need to provide affordable housing for all to meet the county's needs:

Too many developments been done for non local people. Personally I would be happy to see good quality low rise blocks of flats so more homes on a smaller site at a lower cost.

There has been no real attempt to do anything but allow property developers to maximise their outrageous profits. Real affordable homes cannot be entrusted to NCC, most local housing goes into wealthy ownership, not to those who genuinely need it

To date, the most common action that I have seen is developers identifying that land they bought a decade ago and then identified a limited number of 'affordable' housing becomes uneconomic without significant reduction of affordable housing. The definition of affordable housing is such that for a significant percentage of the local population it is unaffordable

- **Resources (39)**

Concerns over the ability of the resources in the Deal to meet development targets:

£7 million wont build many homes will it? We have long waiting lists in housing in all areas of Norfolk and this money won't even scratch the surface!

7m is not nearly enough to achieve this aim and if used would be wasted money that could have greater impact elsewhere.

- **Centralisation (34)**

Concerns over the potential to centralise all planning authority roles within the County Council removing local knowledge held by District Councils:

Just let District councils develop sites for housing. Why have another tier to deliver the same goal?

You don't need devolution and a mayor to do this. District Councils - who currently have housing functions - have been ignored and sidelined in this proposal.

- **Brownfield (23)**

Using existing/brownfield sites in built up areas rather than open countryside

building more and more housing in a predominantly agricultural county is not the answer. In most cases there is no infrastructure to support this and even if there were, the developers will not stop at 'Brownfield Sites'. I see this especially in the spoilt areas of North Norfolk - once sites of 'outstanding natural beauty' - to know what happens when developers, aided by the seduction of more taxes

and massive profits, are allowed free rein over house building. Then there is the wanton destruction of trees and wildlife that accompany it.

Housing should only be built when there are sufficient jobs are in place on brownfield sites only.

- **Local (23)**

Focus on local needs based on understanding of the local context:

We don't need any more people moving into this county. You need to identify and use the skills that are needed and train. It's simple.

- **Need (22)**

Development to meet identifiable need(s)

Planning should be decided on need and not the need for a small group of people to profit.

Local planning boards seem to ignore local opinion and people feel powerless. This demonstrates that local leadership doesn't always listen well to their communities or else they have more compelling hidden agendas.

- **Second homes (20)**

Concern about housing development to increase second home ownership, particularly in respect of buying up new developments:

I live in a rural area in NE Norfolk where a good proportion of property is secondary homes or holiday lets as a result house prices are sky high It's not the need for development of houses in brownfield sites that's needed it's more the control and taxation of second homes to make cost out the London factor.

All new housing in the rural part of the region is going to second home owners. This means that the levelling up fund will be used to line the pockets of housing developers instead of people who need it. Some areas have as much as 30% of properties as second homes.

- **Sustainable (14)**

Development should focus on environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Why is east Anglia the dumping ground for more housing? We need... passivhaus⁵ standard housing, but I doubt that's what this deal will deliver.

⁵ Passivhaus, literally passive house in English, refers to buildings created to rigorous energy efficient design standards so that they maintain an almost constant temperature

any new housing should not be over 100 dwellings and only in an area where there is sufficient employment and sustainable transport - whilst the County is not the planning authority is it the agent for the Highways England and should aim to work with the LPA's to generate lower housing demands but increasing employment options.

5.2.3 Reasons Unsure (neither agree nor disagree)

In descending order, the most frequently mentioned broad themes in opposition to the proposal were:

- **Remain to be convinced about environmental considerations:**
Respondents were unsure if the proposal had fully addressed concerns around prioritisation of the use of **brownfield** over agricultural (**farm**) land, so ensuring **suitable** development including concerns over adequate sustainable **infrastructure** (100 comments in total).
- **Intelligence led provision to meet local need:**
The lack of detail around the use of **local intelligence** to develop housing and employment sites that met local **need** including a focus on **affordable** housing caused respondents to remain unsure about the proposal (67 comments in total).
- **Uncertainty over the funding settlement:**
Respondents were unsure if the resources in the settlement would enable delivery of the development targets associated with the Deal (16 comments).
- **Uncertainty over the consultation:**
Respondents expressed reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (11 comments).

5.2.3.1 Codes (unsure)

From the comments provided by respondents who were unsure about the proposal the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Infrastructure (36)**

Identified need to ensure all supporting infrastructure is in place prior to building:

All development should include provision of infrastructure - schools, GPs etc - to be built BEFORE other building is permitted.

We already have houses being built without the infrastructure there to support it

- **Suitable (35)**

The use of suitable sites to protect the local environment:

We have enough housing - keep the area natural in its beauty and invest in the infrastructure for employment and businesses to thrive.

Yes we do need more housing! However our existing housing is in dire need of regenerating first and we need to try and maintain as much of our countryside as possible to support wildlife and our beautiful scenery which is what brings in a lot of tourists!

- **Affordable (29)**

The need to provide affordable housing for all to meet the county's needs:

"affordable" housing must mean just that - smaller properties which can be afforded by your average young people on a realistic wage. We have enough 4 & 5 bed properties at the moment - stop building more!

I am ambivalent about unrestricted housing projects as this may lead to the disfigurement of Norfolk's open spaces. At the same time I recognise that affordable housing is needed for local populations whilst restricting an unwanted influx of second home owners.

- **Brownfield (19)**

Using existing/brownfield sites in built-up areas rather than open countryside:

All development should be on brownfield sites, of which there are plenty.

I'm in favour of employment sites being developed but more housing should only be developed on brownfield sites.

- **Resources (16)**

Concerns over the ability of the resources in the Deal to meet development targets:

Really nervous about this one. Obviously building decent affordable homes is a priority and is already in our Neighbourhood Plans, so in a sense that is a given. The text suggests that the £7m only comes if this Deal is agreed - really? There'd be £0 otherwise?

This is a long-term objective and given the demographic breakdown of the county will not help to generate growth either in housing or employment in the near term. I'm not sure how much £7m can really alter the long-term trend of Norfolk becoming a 'retirement' and 'holiday' county for decades.

- **Local (15)**

Focus on local needs based on understanding of the local context

Norfolk does not need "housing" it needs "local homes for local people..."

As long as locals are correctly consulted and this will not just be another scheme for developments sake is

- **Need (14)**

Development to meet identifiable need(s)

The housing needs to be where it is genuinely needed so that people can live where they are needed to work, for example to provide care in the community, and to continue to live in the areas where they were brought up.

There is a need for more housing, but more focus needs to be on brownfield sites and ensuring that where populations of existing towns have been increased, the infrastructure must be improved at the same time.

- **Consultation (11)**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions:

The language here is waffly,

Another poorly drafted question which somehow implies that something is currently "shutting down" housing and employment opportunities without offering any explanation as to why that is or how the Deal would rectify this.

- **Farm (10)**

Protection of agricultural land from development:

this needs to be balanced as Norfolk is known for its farming and rural beauty agree more houses are needed but don't take all the green land away

support the idea of developing brownfield sites but am concerned about the loss of agricultural land (not just to housing but to conservation and green energy projects too). Norfolk should be at the forefront of the UK's food security - I'm not convinced that our current (or indeed proposed) approach is doing it. Indeed I think it is taking it in the wrong direction.

- **Intelligence (9)**

Local knowledge about the specifics of the area:

Will this give Norfolk the ability to make our own decisions?

I think the employment sites would bring the housing requirements...(with them).

6 INTEGRATED TRANSPORT

Respondents were asked to provide their response to the question:

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

The analysis of the open and closed elements of this question are set out below.

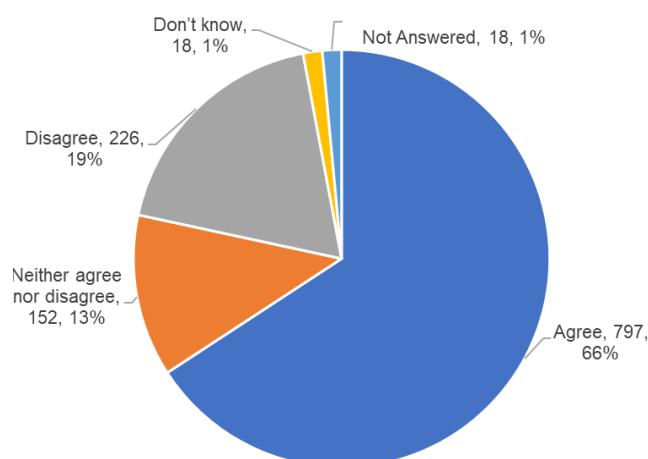
6.1 Quantitative (Closed) Responses

Respondents provided their response against a closed rating scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree.

When the results were analysed the majority of respondents were in agreement with the proposal as seen below:

- The majority (66%) agreed with the proposal (37% strongly agree, 29% agree)
- Just under a fifth (19%) disagreed (12% strongly disagreed, 7% disagree)
- Just over a tenth (13%) were unsure (neither agree nor disagree)
- A small number (1%) provided a response indicating they did not know
- The remainder (1%) did not answer.

Response	No.	%
Agree	797	66%
Neither agree nor disagree	152	13%
Disagree	226	19%
Don't know	18	1%
Not Answered	18	1%
Total	1,211	100%



6.2 Qualitative (Open) Responses

Having provided their responses to the closed questions respondents were then asked to provide a free text reason for their response.

Responses to the prompt ***“Why do you say that?”*** were analysed and grouped thematically around reasons for support, opposition or being unsure, as shown below.

NB: When reporting the themes we present the codes (tags) in **bold text** as they are recorded in the system and reported in detail in section 6.2.2.

6.2.1 Reasons for Agreeing

In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in support of the proposal were:

- **An opportunity to improve public transport:**
Respondents focused on enhancing the **public transport** offer in the county as a key benefit of the Deal, particularly in the opportunity to increase **bus efficiency** (296 comments in total).
- **Adopting an evidence-led approach to developing an enhanced transport offer:**
Underpinned by the opportunity for **action** after experiencing stagnation/decay in the county's transport infrastructure, new approaches such as enhanced **contract management** directed by local **intelligence** were seen as a key benefit (100 comments in total).
- **Adopting an environmentally friendly approach to transport:**
Consideration of active transport, car sharing and **alternative** approaches to transport and developing a net zero /low carbon transport infrastructure to address adverse **environmental** issues were seen as positives of the proposal (97 comments in total).
- **New road building:**
The opportunity to meet the perceived need for new road building (32 comments).
- **An opportunity to enhance transport connectivity for all:**
The opportunity to increase transport **connectivity** across the county to link key service areas such as employment and tourism with a focus on improving links to/within **rural** areas (21 comments in total).

6.2.1.1 Codes (for)

From the comments provided by respondents who agreed with the proposal the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Public Transport (186)**

The opportunity to increase the public transport offer in the County - all modes - to make the car attractive as a last resort rather than first choice:

I actively avoid the city due to all the road closures because it becomes a nightmare to navigate around. This would be fine if other transport links into the city were efficient and carbon neutral but that isn't the case. I know this is the way forward but there doesn't seem to be a cohesive plan, rather sporadic approaches. Hopefully this funding can address that.

Improving public transport is essential for a whole range of reasons and in recent years it has diminished and become so poorly delivered that it really needs a complete overhaul.

Again being masters of your own destiny must be the best way forward. Rural transport has been decimated and needs to be reinvested in. Popular well used routes should find lost (sic) leader routes

We need better public transport so we become less reliant on private cars.

- **Bus Efficiency (110)**

A specific focus on improving the availability and reliability of bus services anywhere in the County:

Bus services, particularly in the evenings, are dreadful and I would love to see investment.

Many rural people rely on Buses, so more support here would be great. Many people I know complain about buses not arriving at all, or coming late.

to be able to travel on buses which come more than 1 per every 6 hours would be wonderful and would take off the roads all these extra cars which now invade our villages by overbuilding

Someone needs to think about bus services...The £2 cap on bus fares is a great idea and it would be useful to have it extended, even if it would be certain days or times.

- **Rural (104)**

Recognition that the predominantly rural nature of the County means transport requirements vary:

The govt want us to reduce emissions but no thought has been given to villages where transport is poor i.e. most of Norfolk. Nearly everyone needs a car to get to work because buses aren't often enough and trains don't really serve the county as they should. Two train lines just going around the edges of Norfolk is not enough.

Norfolk's rural geography contributes to its minimal and fragmented public transport provision. This lack of integrated transport impacts the skills and jobs markets, and therefore the economy, as many people cannot afford personal transport and therefore cannot commute to jobs.

Rural networks should be considered at a local level

We need to maximise our access to transport to bring in wealth to rural areas and better service the coastal areas

- **Connectivity (95)**

Transport links to help other service areas (e.g. employment, tourism etc):

Poor transport provision is a major issue for Norfolk and has a huge impact on its economic development, as well as the emotional and social wellbeing of its residents. Better and more co-ordinated transport links would provide much better opportunities and quality of life, better access to services, and would also help with things like lack of care provision in the North.

Businesses can be hampered by poor transportation. In either getting people or goods to where they are needed in a timely, economically viable way.

An integrated transport scheme is vital in Norfolk because we need adequate transport links by train and car but also bus services.

A decent transport system linking most areas and at regular times, think of the elderly and their needs

- **Alternatives (79)**

Consideration of active transport, car sharing and alternative approaches to transport:

Many roads between villages can only be safely navigated by car such as that between Taverham parish church and Costessey/Ringland lane junction. This needs funding for cycle/footpaths urgently so lessen the need for car use.

We need to make environmentally friendly transport more available.

We should have an Oyster card equivalent for Norfolk...

- **Action (44)**

The desire to see positive change after experiencing stagnation/decay in the county's transport infrastructure:

It's essential but I'm not holding my breath. In the 45 years I've lived in Norfolk transport has got worse and too much emphasis is on cycling when an ageing population needs better bus and train services.

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.

- **Intelligence (39)**

Benefits of local evidence, local knowledge and context:

Having control of the funding for transport will allow the resource to be best used for Norfolk and it's residents, given its unique geography, rurality and population need.

Again, local needs being responded to by local leaders.

- **Road investment (32)**

The perceived need for new road building:

As our roads continue to get worse it is essential we prioritise improvements.

Car transport is essential in Norfolk. We must not unduly victimise car usage.

- **Environmental (18)**

Developing a net zero /low carbon transport infrastructure:

Public transport is key to Norfolk meeting Net Zero targets and we cannot do this without the flexibility of un-ringfenced funding. I would like to see more local say in how buses and trains are run and need routes established for rural communities and I hope that a move like this would help achieve that.

Transportation should move away from the car based model and back to public transport and active travel. The car is destroying our countryside, urban areas, climate and lives.

- **Contract Management (17)**

The potential for new approaches to transport in the county:

...it is well known transport contracts go to lowest bids... It should not be just on cheapest quote, but also taking into account who will provide, and continue to provide a good service, and be business-like and value for money.

Public transport in Norfolk is abysmal. You don't get complaints because people accept the awful service. If you spent a week using the buses I think you'd contract manage. The service is poor, buses often filthy.

6.2.2 Reasons for Disagreeing

In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in opposition to the proposal were:

- **No faith anything will result from the proposal:**

Respondents felt that any **action** proposed was unlikely to materialise and the required skills to adopt a new approach in the county did not exist particularly around changes associated with **contract management** (50 comments in total).

- **Public transport is broken beyond fixing:**

The view was that **public transport** is beyond fixing and respondents were not convinced proposal will make any difference to **bus efficiency** (46 comments in total).

- **Too little, too late:**

The **resources** offered within the proposal are not enough to reverse the decline in **road** investment and overall the funds are too little to achieve anything of note(34 comments in total).

- **Achieving net zero:**

In terms of **environmental** transport initiatives respondents feel Norfolk is focused on the car not on net zero. Additionally, the infrastructure is not in place to support a switch to electric or walking/cycling to provide alternatives, and the required powers to achieve this are only available to a combined authority(32 comments in total).

- **Consultation:**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (15 comments).

- **Rural transport improvements:**

Reservations exist that any transport improvements in the Deal will reach beyond towns and cities into rural communities (14 comments).

6.2.2.1 Codes (against)

From the comments provided by respondents who disagreed with the proposal, the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Action (32)**

The desire to see positive change after experiencing stagnation/decay in the county's transport infrastructure.

A huge amount of money has been spent on various projects already and achieved no noticeable benefits or improvements. The NDR road is good though the number and quality of all bar one of the junctions is unbelievably poor. Hugely overpriced too. What hope therefore, for devolution.

Neither national government or Norfolk County Council have excelled themselves in national or local infrastructure projects, so I have no faith that the new deal authority would be any more successful.

- **Public Transport (27)**

The opportunity to increase the public transport offer in the County – all modes to make the car attractive as a last resort rather than first choice.

Transport, in Norfolk, has passed the point of no return. Failure, of local politicians, to invest in support is now coming home to roost. What a shame. We could have had a network of buses that appealed to tourists.

It's not financially viable. Public transportation does not work for small villages.

- **Resources (23)**

The resources made available under the deal - will they be enough/new/available?

The amount of funding offered will not achieve this.

A properly funded local government would be able to deal with the transport issues within the county. This deal would do nothing to solve the one county issues such as poor and inadequate rail provision and lack of major highway integration and work on the A47 Acle through road.

- **Alternatives (22)**

Consideration of active transport, car sharing and alternative approaches to transport:

NCC needs to recognise the need for a fossil-fuel based transport system for many decades yet, and not to try to push residents into expensive virtue signalling by way of electric vehicles. NCC regularly fails to provide adequately for cycling and walking, with poor design standards making 'facilities' unusable.

The full powers to regulate strategic transport are only available to combined authorities. We should be demanding all the powers and the exclusion of the most important ones in the County's proposal means the proposals are unacceptable

- **Bus Efficiency (19)**

A specific focus on improving the availability and reliability of bus services anywhere in the County:

Having read the Norfolk Plan for bus travel I am far from convinced that this can be carried out at the local level without much more thought.

Bus services are being cut consistently. Most people can't use buses for any distance as the timetables are not conducive to getting both to their destination and home again. Vast housing estates are being built with no proper usable bus services, this means more and more people are forced to travel by car. This would not change with devolution.

- **Contract Management (18)**

The potential for new approaches to transport in the county:

I do not believe that NCC has the skills or capability to manage transport.

Our present transport planners create enough problems with totally anti-motorist policies. This would only make things worse!

- **Consultation (15)**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions:

Should be brought under a mayoral entity, not county council.

Why is there no information in this "consultation" indicating the opposing view to that taken by NCC? You should be explaining the advantages and the disadvantages of the proposal.

- **Rural (14)**

Recognition that the predominantly rural nature of the County means transport requirements vary:

This is a rural and more elderly community, but the concentration for transport improvements are always the towns and cities and walking and cycling. The more isolated and elderly are just left to get in their cars, which is made more difficult by the anti-car councils.

There is no focus on the needs of market towns and villages.

- **Road investment (11)**

The perceived need for new road building:

West Norfolk has already suffered cuts in public transport, whether local or further afield. The A47 at the King's Lynn end badly needs dualling to ease congestion, help hauliers, and encourage people to travel.

Norfolk is a rural county. People are reliant on the motor car for transport. That is what residents want. The drive to discourage such use is reducing residents ability to lead their lives as they wish.

- **Environmental (10)**

Developing a net zero /low carbon transport infrastructure:

Norfolk county council has a transport policy based on private car ownership. This is totally unfit for an urban area like Norwich.

Building the Western Link would be illegal in terms of NCC's net zero commitment. We don't not need more roads. We need to change the ways in which we travel.

6.2.3 Reasons Unsure (neither agree nor disagree)

In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes from those respondents who were unsure whether to support or oppose the proposal were:

- **A desire to see a focus on delivery:**

Respondents were concerned that the **resources** on offer were not enough to address the needs of Norfolk, including the need to be convinced adequate funds are available and there is the opportunity to bring **public transport** back into public ownership. This includes more effective public transport run through alternative approaches such as **contract management** and **connectivity** by focusing on delivery not new roads, including recognition that not enough funds are available for **road repairs** (59 comments in total).

- **Addressing transport needs for all:**

Respondents need to be convinced bus efficiency will address the needs of all people in towns, cities and rural settings. Above all ensuring transport improvements meet the needs of people in rural areas (35 comments in total).

- **Addressing net zero:**

Respondents expressed disappointment with the lack of ambition for sustainable transport and other alternatives (13 comments).

- **Consultation:**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (12 comments).

6.2.3.1 Codes (unsure)

From the comments provided by respondents who were unsure about the proposal, the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Public Transport (22)**

The opportunity to increase the public transport offer in the County - all modes - to make the car attractive as a last resort rather than first choice.

Public transport is very important and needs a great deal of investment. If the 'pot' of money devolved to our region isn't a great deal more than is currently spent then the needed improvements still won't be possible just by managing them locally.

Public transport needs to be brought back into public control. Norfolk's bus service is appalling. Punctuality is laughable, coverage is patchy, timetable is largely aimed at commuting. Evening services are minimal.

- **Bus Efficiency (21)**

A specific focus on improving the availability and reliability of bus services anywhere in the County.

Public transport needs to meet the needs of local people in order to get people to use it more. Too often buses pass by empty or buses get cancelled and you spend a long time and a lot of money trying to get home.

More needs to be done to support local bus routes, which in some of the villages are almost non-existent. A large majority of residents, particularly in the coastal areas, are pensioners. Many do not drive and rely on a bus service to get about. Electric vehicles are not a practical way forward, with the exception of urban areas.

- **Rural (14)**

Recognition that the predominantly rural nature of the County means transport requirements vary:

Transport links are so important. So many rural areas don't have access to a bus route. Having control of our own budget the council could make some provision.

plans for transport currently favour Norwich, not rural area where better paths for walking between villages and cycle routes are sadly lacking. I don't have confidence that benefits will be fairly distributed with the current short-sighted attitudes. For example many rural roads have large verges which could be converted into cycle and walking routes but Breckland says it's too expensive so they would rather have cars on the road, pollution and rural poverty (lack of mobility being a key driver).

- **Alternatives (13)**

Consideration of active transport, car sharing and alternative approaches to transport, including changes in the skills base to access local opportunities reducing the need for transport:

Very disappointed that such a geographically large county seems to have no vision for policies on sustainable travel. Until such a vision is established the County's productivity will struggle to improve.

Given other areas of the country have tried this with mixed success it would be better to focus on skilled job creation rather than tinker with transport infrastructure.

- **Consultation (12)**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions or lack of information to inform decision making:

these questions are worded to get the result you wish, of course we want control, of course we want more money per head. but not the way this proposal is put together

It's not obvious what the devolution deal is making possible.

- **Action (11)**

The desire to see positive change after experiencing stagnation/decay in the county's transport infrastructure:

The current track record of Norfolk County Council is lacking in this regard, there is a lack of confidence that the current setup in Norfolk is not fit for purpose and needs changing before Norfolk takes a lead in this area. there are too many examples of vanity projects which have not delivered the stated benefits.

Don't believe you have the ability or knowledge to achieve this.

- **Resources (9)**

The resources made available under the deal - will they be enough/new/available?

In principle an integrated settlement sounds good. The NCC would still be dealing with a patchwork of private businesses, each with their own profits to defend.

The budget for roads never includes sufficient for real maintenance of existing roads. There is no point creating new when existing systems fail due to lack of maintenance. Bus services in rural areas are notoriously expensive and any budget from Government should reflect this rather than being based on population or similar when Norfolk always loses out.

- **Road repairs (9)**

A specific focus on repairing existing road surfaces:

Better roads are needed, Pott holes fixed, west Norfolk roads are like riding a big dipper in places. Not sure if the council, controls its own work force at the moment, or contracts out the work. The standard of repairs are atrociously poor and only last a short time. If it is just more money, I see no improvement in the managing of road repair. I rarely travel Norfolk as parking is terrible and I have found it extremely expensive. It reduces my spending in the county.

Given that the same pot holes come back year after year, a bit of snow closes everything I think it's a wonderful pipe dream that has no hope of success.

- **Contract Management (8)**

The potential for new approaches to transport in the county:

More effective and efficient public transport. Including for schools and large employers. Not private companies who run for profit but CICs run for community.

There could be a risk that an overspend on a failed project would seriously affect funding for essential services, trains, buses, cycle-paths, maintenance of road network and the creation of new roads. Proper management of this 'one whole pot' is obviously paramount!

- **Connectivity (7)**

Transport links to help other service areas (e.g. employment, tourism etc):

100% agree with integrated transport. Again, if the money is available for this then let's have it. Are we saying 'County' couldn't manage it if given the money? And that some new, untested organisation definitely could do it better? No evidence.

Improving transport is great but I wouldn't be too impressed if we ended up having more countryside dug up for new roads. The beauty of Norfolk is we have no motorways.

7 ELECTED LEADER AND CABINET

Respondents were asked to provide their response to the question:

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

The analysis of the open and closed elements of this question are set out below.

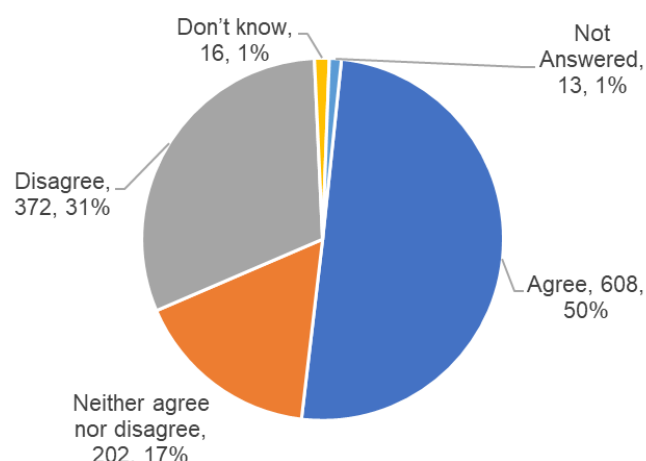
7.1 Quantitative (Closed) Responses

Respondents provided their response against a closed rating scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree.

When the results were analysed of respondents were in agreement, on balance, with the proposal as seen below:

- Half (50%) agreed with the proposal (24% strongly agree and 26% agree)
- Just under a third (31%) disagreed (23% strongly disagree, 8% disagree)
- Just under a fifth (17%) were unsure (neither agree nor disagree)
- 1% did not know
- The remainder (1%) did not provide an answer.

Response	No.	%
Agree	608	50%
Neither agree nor disagree	202	17%
Disagree	372	31%
Don't know	16	1%
Not Answered	13	1%
Total	1,211	100%



7.2 Qualitative (Open) Responses

Having provided their responses to the closed questions respondents were then asked to provide a free text reason for their response.

Responses to the prompt ***“Why do you say that?”*** were analysed and grouped thematically around reasons for support, opposition or otherwise, as shown below.

NB: When reporting the themes we present the codes (tags) in **bold text** as they are recorded in the system and reported in detail in section 7.2.2.

7.2.1 Reasons for Agreeing

In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in support of the proposal were:

- **Enhanced local democratic structures:**
The proposed Deal provides the potential for local people to have a direct involvement in decisions through a directly elected leader in the county, resulting in enhanced **democratic, accountability**. It is hoped that this will lead to increased **transparency** and openness of decision making (301 comments in total).
- **A focus on Norfolk:**
The proposed Deal has the potential to overcome any perceived negative impact of the increased politics in decision-making by having an elected leader focused on the benefits for Norfolk. This could help restore public trust in elected Members and perceptions of Members' competency (74 comments in total).
- **A revised approach to strategy for Norfolk:**
Providing an opportunity to think in a more strategic way (34 comments in total).
- **Positive experience from elsewhere:**
Perceived success/failure of other elected mayors/leaders (14 comments in total).
- **Inefficiency:**
Despite an overall positive acceptance of the proposal, there were some concerns over potential increases in bureaucracy and added layers of decision making seen as a diversion of resources leading to **inefficiency** (7 comments in total).
- **Centralisation:**
Removing important links to local communities through district councils by an increased centralisation of functions under the proposed Deal (5 comments in total).
- **Consultation:**
Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the **consultation** questions (4 comments).

7.2.1.1 Codes (for)

From the comments provided by respondents who agreed with the proposal, the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Accountability (187)**
The Deal provides for the opportunity for local people to have a direct involvement in decisions through local democratic arrangements.

Hopefully the electorate will make a wise decision.

This should give a better reflection of democracy in the county and remove some of the power from more rural, traditional voting patterns, better reflecting the county overall.

- **Democratic (67)**

Increases democratic accountability of decision-making to local people:

Directly electing a leader of our local government, which would then have control over a more devolved budget would be a step towards a more direct form of democracy, which I believe would be a wonderful thing.

This would likely bring more cohesion to decision making, and it is good that it will be democratic. However, also important that Norfolk's development is not tied to one person's political or social agenda. How will the board be chosen?

- **Politics (52)**

The perceived negative impact of the increased politicisation of decision making:

For me, this is where it becomes more political! The leader of the council needs to be focused on Norfolk first and foremost - and party politics must be secondary. It is about getting the best leader irrespective of political view. Everyone's passion must be for our beautiful County and doing what is best for the people of Norfolk - not a political party. This is probably a very ideological view - but Norfolk first!!!

Leaders should definitely be elected by the people and not selected by factions. It should happen separate to a local election as well, or on a different ballot at least.

- **Transparency (47)**

The openness of decision making:

A locally accountable leader can only improve public participation.

With additional powers, additional oversight and public engagement essential

- **Strategic (34)**

Providing an opportunity to think in a more strategic way:

With central oversight this provides a robust model. The Norfolk leadership board should also be voted in for full representation and equity, securing diversity of thought.

This is the best way to get more money from central Government, to have a strong voice who can get the best result for Norfolk. The government will listen to them.

- **Trust (22)**

Public trust in Members or perceptions of Members' competency:

One strong leader would be good, I suppose we would have the Mayor of Norfolk.

There is also a risk that the people putting themselves forward to be an elected leader and subsequently appointed do not have the skills, experience and knowledge to lead Norfolk and get the best for the County. Arguably it is a similar risk to currently but the impact of that one person can be significant.

- **Other Mayors (14)**

Perceived success/failure of other elected mayors/leaders:

A proactive Mayor can be a really positive influence. It works well for London and Manchester.

Good that the people get to elect the person leading the Council. If they work as strongly for Norfolk as Andy Burnham does for Manchester it will be a massive improvement.

- **Inefficiency (7)**

Increased bureaucracy and added layers of decision making seen as a diversion of resources:

As long as we don't start creating paid positions for the sake of it. Too many people representing the general public in all governments and councils. Trim down the numbers and make them work for their allowances please.

But we do not need another layer of Management waste, a directly elected Leader but it must Not cost WeThe People any more Monies... Councils are wasting Our monies in many ways, and enough is enough... you need to cut your overheads and be more Efficient...

- **Centralisation (5)**

Removing important links to local communities through district councils by an increased centralisation of functions under the proposed Deal:

It would be nice to have one person overseeing just Norfolk as a whole. Especially if they were someone who knows Norfolk and knows what it is needed to better the county.

It sounds like our very own Norfolk Parliament. Which I am all for, as long as Norwich does not become the hub of everything that is Norfolk, like our capital seems to be in England.

- **Consultation (4)**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions:

I would need to know more to give a stronger opinion on this, but it sounds good from what I have seen so far.

Agree but more information on how this differs from the currently system of elected councillors, what are the benefits?

7.2.2 Reasons for Disagreeing

In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in opposition to the proposal were:

- **Reduced accountability, local connections and trust:**

The Deal has the potential to remove democratic **accountability** through a perceived removal of the process of dialogue and associated checks and balances. In turn this could undermine **trust** in elected officials by concentrating power in one individual, which was felt to be **undemocratic** removing transparency from the process and introducing an increased impact of **politics** in decision-making. The structure put in place could lead to **over-centralisation**, breaking connections with local communities currently achieved through district councils and potentially introducing **inefficiency** through functional duplication (366 comments in total).

- **Negative experience from elsewhere:**

Respondents opposed the deal based on their own negative experiences or views of the performance of other mayors elsewhere in the country and the Police and Crime Commissioner locally (37 comments in total).

- **Consultation:**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the **consultation** questions (14 comments in total).

7.2.2.1 Codes (against)

From the comments provided by respondents who disagreed with the proposal, the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Politics (104)**

The perceived negative impact of the increased politicisation of decision making:

Nope, this just a power grab by power hungry politicians. Don't pretend it's anything else.

*I hate the idea of an elected leader and would much prefer a Mayor.
I want all interested parties and leaders to be involved in decision*

making and not a small group of individuals who may or may not have their own interests at the forefront of their decisions ... I would like a non-political person to become Mayor and make Norfolk County Council non-political but a fair governing body working only in the interests of Norfolk!

- **Inefficiency (101)**

Increased bureaucracy and added layers of decision making seen as a diversion of resources:

Yet more expense and governance around another election and more wasted money running a larger office. You should have gone for the mayoral model but this would have taken power away from the Council.

More bureaucracy more wasted money.

- **Accountability (61)**

The Deal provides for the opportunity for local people to have a direct investment in decisions through local democratic arrangements.

Debate and frequent democratic elections lead to better decisions than leaders.

More quangos behind an elected leader. So if the board or cabinet disagree with the elected person who gets the say? The whole system needs to be elected to be fair. Not jobs for the boys system.

- **Trust (48)**

Public trust in Members or perceptions of Members' competency:

Only if that leader is totally independent and not aligned with any political party. Clearly if the leader is political he will only follow his party line, which means decisions will have bias which is not always to majorities benefit.

A Mayor is over powerful and a cabinet system is not democratic enough.

- **Undemocratic (36)**

Giving decision making power to a new body and an elected mayor is perceived as reducing democratic control.

One person cannot be held accountable or properly listen to what people have to say, inevitable that the person 'in charge' will be a political appointment and will be led by party politics rather than listen to all views.

We have such a system in central government and it is hugely undemocratic, do we really want power in the hands of a small group led by one person on a local level as well? I don't think so!

- **Other Mayors (24)**

Perceived success/failure of other elected mayors/leaders:

Bristol... is not working well - with major cuts in services (including transport!). The only ones that seem to work well are Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool. I have worked in the latter two areas over the past three years. There are none that have worked in rural areas.

Manchester aside, this isn't a model which has worked universally well across the country. Too many grandstanding politically motivated figureheads from out of county would turn up. Not too much wrong with the existing democratic STRUCTURE aside from losing so much of their budgets over the last 20 years. Ask the people and councils of Teesside what they think of their unitary mayor.

- **Centralisation (23)**

Removing important links to local communities through district councils by an increased centralisation of functions under the proposed Deal:

The idea of devolution is to increase accountability and give more power to democratic bodies. A leader and cabinet system will do the opposite. It will simply be a conduit for central government allocating pots of funding to whichever leader can put the best proposal to central government.

This system of governance is sub-optimal as it misses out on the key role that the county's city, borough, and district councils can play.

- **Transparency (16)**

Concerns around openness of decision making and the associated process of checks and balances:

It isn't clear what the checks and balances will be on excessive use of powers by this role, when there is precedent of things like vanity projects.

Council elections using proportional representation voting would be hugely more relevant and meaningful. No monopolising of power in one group.

- **Consultation (14)**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation materials:

I do not consider this to be a full and proper consultation. I cannot see anywhere the 'alternative' point of view/other options laid out. This makes it impossible to have an informed opinion. All the introductions to each section are biased, subjective and leading.

Far too much remains unexplained.

- **Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) (13)**

Comparisons between the established office of Police and Crime Commissioner and the proposed Directly Elected Leader (DEL):

The history of local politicians gives me no reason to have confidence in this. We had to vote for a local police commissioner and look where that has got us! the local police commissioner has made no improvement whatsoever in local crime.

PCC elected leaders have been a failure. Crime has never been higher and detentions never lower. I would worry about this kind of power in one hands.

7.2.3 Reasons Unsure (neither agree nor disagree)

In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes from those respondents who were unsure whether to support or oppose the proposal were:

- **The need to demonstrate transparent and accountable processes:**
The **politics** of the arrangements were a cause of confusion, particularly if the leader is from an opposition party to the majority and how this would be managed. To counter this, respondents felt the leader must act in the interests of Norfolk to enhance **accountability** ensuring the process is **democratic**. All of which need to be underpinned by **trust** and **transparency** (108 comments in total).
- **An efficient and democratically accountable leader's office:**
The potential for being seen as **undemocratic** must be countered alongside a move away for potential **inefficiency** through duplication of function in the leader's office. This must incorporate consideration of the ways in which the changed County Council District Council (**CCDC**) **relations** can be most effectively managed through these arrangements (32 comments in total).
- **Consultation:**
Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the **consultation** questions (5 comments in total).
- **Resources:**
Reassurance sought that the **resources** in the settlement are adequate and futureproofed (3 comments in total).

7.2.3.1 Codes (unsure)

From the comments provided by respondents who were unsure about the proposal, the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Politics (46)**

The perceived negative impact of the increased politicisation of decision-making

Not sure how this would work in practice especially if leader is a different political party or affiliation to the council.

don't know how this would work? If you had a Labour leader elected by the public for instance could they pick a cabinet of Labour councillors who might be voted down on everything they wanted to do by a conservative majority? How would anything ever get done?

- **Accountability (39)**

The Deal provides for the opportunity for local people to have a direct investment in decisions through local democratic arrangements.

There is no evidence of any leadership at Norfolk County Council at this present time. If NCC and government decided to go ahead with devolution, Norfolk would need a very strong leader and a focused, business-like and efficient team of officers to carry devolution through.

They must be sensitive to the needs of all the population and must not indulge in vanity expenditure.

- **Inefficiency (24)**

Increased bureaucracy and added layers of decision making seen as a diversion of resources:

It depends upon what this will cost the council tax payers. We don't want another high paid civil servant such as a mayor the role must not cost the council tax payers any more money.

With new responsibilities comes higher expenses and more staff. The £20m will not go very far.

- **Transparency (10)**

The openness of decision making and democratic processes:

As long as other means to encourage greater participation in the democratic process are also explored, such as increasing voter turnout during elections.

I'm not sure what the impact of this would be locally and what difference it could bring positive or negative

- **Trust (10)**

Public trust in Members and perceptions of Members' competency:

I agree in principal with this. However, it is easy to tell the public what they want to hear. Those that are working with the applicants have more knowledge on the real working person behind a campaign. I would suggest 30% of the votes are made by all council employees and the further 70% completed by public vote.

We do agree with the cabinet system as it currently operates as we feel it works. The elected leader is untried and therefore an unknown.

- **Consultation (5)**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions and the provision of sufficient information to make an informed choice:

Not sure I understand the implications of this change fully enough to comment.

Don't feel sufficiently convinced for or against.

- **County Council/District Council Relations (4)**

The changed dynamics in the relations between County and District councils under the proposed Deal:

Not sure that another elected person would not muddy the water with district councils.

Council noted there could be a lot of additional cost involved with the election and questioned potential conflict within decision making bodies.

- **Undemocratic (4)**

Giving decision making power to a new body and a directly elected leader (DEL) is perceived as reducing democratic control and accountability:

I am concerned that the number of voters would be very low, like for the Police Commissioner

I think the public are turned off voting because they don't believe it results in democracy. And locally I think a lot of people just don't care because they don't see anything changing which is of benefit.

- **Democratic (3)**

Will the Deal increase the democratic accountability of decision-making to local people?

This would likely bring more cohesion to decision making, and it is good that it will be democratic. However, also important that Norfolk's development is not tied to one person's political or social agenda. How will the board be chosen?

Whilst more democracy is always good I am concerned about how this will work if the elected council leader represents a different party to that in power at County Hall.

- **Resources (3)**

The resources made available under the deal - will they be enough/new/available?

I think that careful thought must be given to this process. It's not great when "money talks" and only those who can afford to stand, stand. Hello USA?

The proposal is fine, but I believe that after initial government funding, the cost of the bureaucracy will be detrimental to any advantages gained. The 4yr. term is too long, as any incompetence of the elected members would have to be tolerated for the term.

8 PRINCIPLES OF DEVOLUTION

Respondents were asked to provide their response to the question:

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the principles of devolution and the benefits it brings to Norfolk?

The analysis of the open and closed elements of this question are set out below.

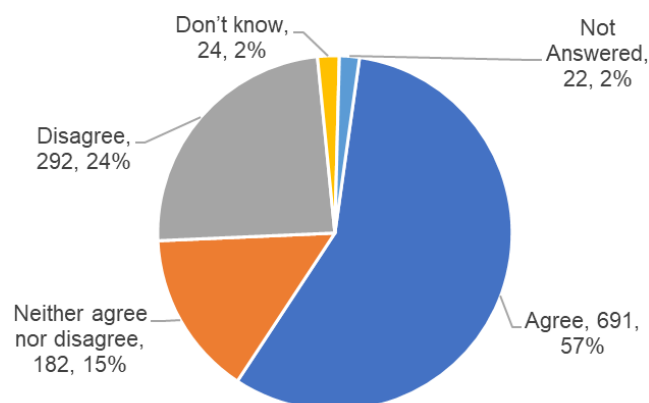
8.1 Quantitative (Closed) Responses

Respondents provided their response against a closed rating scale, strongly disagree to strongly agree.

When the results were analysed the majority of respondents were in agreement with the proposal as seen below:

- The majority (57%) agreed with the proposal (25% strongly agree, 32% agree)
- Just under a quarter (24%) disagreed (16% strongly disagree, 8% disagree)
- 15% were unsure (neither agree nor disagree)
- 2% did not know
- The remainder (2%) did not provide an answer.

Response	No.	%
Agree	691	57%
Neither agree nor disagree	182	15%
Disagree	292	24%
Don't know	24	2%
Not Answered	22	2%
Total	1,211	100%



8.2 Qualitative (Open) Responses

Having provided their responses to the closed questions respondents were then asked to provide a free text reason for their response.

Responses to the prompt ***“Why do you say that?”*** were analysed and grouped thematically around reasons for support, opposition or otherwise, as shown below.

NB: When reporting the themes we present the codes (tags) in **bold text** as they are recorded in the system and reported in detail in section 8.2.2.

8.2.1 Reasons for Agreeing

In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in support of the proposal were:

- **Enhanced accountability based on local understanding:**
The proposal allows for enhanced **accountability** and lobbying in the interests of the county based on **intelligence** rooted in local knowledge about the specifics of the area underpinned by understanding of context, history and geography of local and hyper local **locations** (158 comments in total).
- **Pragmatic acceptance of conditions for enhance national visibility:**
The **terms** of the Deal, while not entirely suitable/acceptable are accepted to achieve a potentially enhanced **national voice** for the county at Westminster, with a practical acceptance that **politics** mean there may be a price to pay in the future (104 comments in total).
- **Acceptance of the principles to access resources otherwise unavailable:**
The view is that county will be **better off** in terms of additional funds and self-determination, although the **resources** are recognised as not being very large. However, it is recognised that without the **funds** associated with the Deal it will be harder to make progress, while offering the opportunity to reduce duplication of function and improve **efficiency** (81 comments in total).

8.2.1.1 Codes (for)

From the comments provided by respondents who agreed with the proposal, the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Accountability (95)**
The Deal provides for the opportunity for local people to have a direct involvement in decisions through local democratic arrangements.

better lobbying powers...

This needs to be monitored very closely, as it would be all too easy for any elected official to direct the funding in ways that suits their needs or wishes rather than the collected needs and wishes of the people in Norfolk.

- **Intelligence (46)**
Local knowledge about the specifics of the area:

local issues should be for local people

Good to be tailoring Norfolk's budget to the needs of its people...

- **Terms (40)**

Discussions around the terms set out on the Deal between central and local government, considering the adequacy/ reasonableness of the offer:

I agree with the principals I however disagree with the current approach to elected mayor. Whilst I understand that this is one of the rules attached to the funding I don't see how renaming the leader of the council mayor and having essentially the same cabinet will change things enough to realise all the benefits of the new opportunity.

Agree ONLY because of the extra money. No other reason. It's really a Westminster bribe so that if anything goes wrong the central government can step away and say it isn't their responsibility and heap blame on the locally elected leader. They stay squeaky clean (hollow laughter).

- **National Voice (35)**

The potential of the Deal to strengthen Norfolk's voice at Westminster/national level:

If this increases the 'clout' Norfolk has in Westminster, that's a good thing and makes the local leadership more accountable on a county level.

Westminster must take more notice of rural areas.

- **Better off (29)**

Discussion of the anticipated financial benefits of the Deal:

Having control over our destiny be it money, housing etc has got to be better than the present system.

Local control of sustainable transport solutions, housing and business planning, climate change actions, adult education and training and investment spending are all clear benefits and acutely needed to unlock the potential of a region that lacks the necessary infrastructure to pull its weight in the national economy.

- **Politics (24)**

The perceived negative impact of the increased politicisation of decision making:

This is the key aspect of the deal in my view - it is not just about the funding but that fact that Norfolk is seen as a county which is worth trialling new policy.

Agree, but with a few reservations, I don't think this Tory government gives money away without a longer term benefit for themselves.

- **Resources (19)**

The resources made available under the Deal - will they be enough/new/available?

Confirmed annual funding for the long term allows projects/strategies to go forward without bidding scrambles and abortive costs.

I agree in principle with devolution but don't think it will bring as much benefit to Norfolk as the 'powers that be' seem to think. £20 million a year is very little money to do anything meaningful with and the same political party will direct how this is spent, as always, so I'm doubtful that much will change.

- **Efficiency (17)**

The extent to which the Deal offers the potential for reduction in duplication, pooling of resources etc:

Bidding for funding is time consuming and diverts resources persuading those without local knowledge to release funding, therefore devolution has the potential to reduce wasted time and allow staff to focus on delivery. This would be with the proviso that adequate funding and internal audit processes are in place to ensure quality is maintained.

Localisation should be more efficient use of public funds.

- **Locations (17)**

The extent to which the Deal allows for response to meet local and hyper local need based on understanding of context, history and geography:

Good to be tailoring Norfolk's budget to the needs of its people. But Norfolk is already quite an isolated community that is behind in many ways. We would also benefit from ensuring we have strong ties with professionals and organisations from other parts of the government and the country so that we can use that budget to make Norfolk a more innovative and modern community.

Agree principal but it must work for rural communities as well as towns and cities.

- **Funds (16)**

Discussions around the extent to which the Deal's proposed settlement is not enough or too small to do what's proposed:

Without funding we cannot make progress.

It isn't clear how much funding Norfolk County Council will need to contribute towards devolution. The capacity funding mentioned as being provided seems very small compared to the cost of

administering devolution, engagement with partners and the different areas of funding etc.

8.2.2 Reasons for Disagreeing

In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes in opposition to the proposal were:

- **Failing to achieve any gains through added bureaucracy:**
Significant concern was expressed over the potential for **inefficiency** by introducing increased bureaucracy and added layers of decision. This was felt to be compounded by the inherent potential for **duplication** of function within the Deal. Further, related, negative comment focused on the perceptions of a poor performance **record** of the county council which did not promote confidence in the ability to deliver the Deal (110 comments in total).
- **Potentially difficult conditions:**
The **terms** associated with the Deal have the potential to be unacceptable, with the impact of **politics** felt to be potentially of significant negative impact in the future (85 comments in total).
- **The financial settlement is not worthwhile:**
The **funds** were not felt to be enough to compensate for the additional responsibilities given to Norfolk under the Deal and in the long run the county would be **worse off** (47 comments in total).
- **Loss of democratic accountability through the election of a leader:**
Concern was expressed about the loss of democratic **accountability** through concentration of power in the hands of one person in the shape of the elected leader, which in turn was felt to be **undemocratic** by reducing checks and balances (46 comments in total).
- **Consultation:**
Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (18 comments in total).

8.2.2.1 Codes (against)

From the comments provided by respondents who disagreed with the proposal, the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Inefficiency (60)**
Increased bureaucracy and added layers of decision-making seen as a diversion of resources:

There are no benefits for the residents of Norfolk. Just more bureaucracy.

I don't think it will have any significant impact and will ultimately be used to move service obligations off of the central government budgets, while cutting the size of grants - pretty much like the rest of the local government.

- **Politics (45)**

The perceived negative impact of the increased politicisation of decision-making:

This is Tory jobs for Tory mates. Norfolk's "voice" will be no more important than anyone else's. Stop pretending this is actually going to be anything other than a power grab. There will be little benefit to Norfolk...

you have to ask yourself why government are doing this and I expect so they don't take the blame when situations don't materialize.

- **Terms (40)**

Discussions around the terms set out on the deal between central and local government, considering the adequacy/ reasonableness of the offer:

There is nothing new here in the way of self-determination or extra powers. The deal is subject to a biannual review and the whim of future Governments. The money is not index linked and the new governance will make Norfolk a laughing stock over time it fails to work.

Why was the deal negotiated without consultation from the public on what we want? This deal will make the situation where wealthy land and business owners have undue power much worse. The extra funding being promoted in the rhetoric is actually not much at all over 30 years. The council is not capable of taking on new powers - it isn't even coping with existing responsibilities. This deal will be a disaster for the average person in Norfolk.

- **Record (26)**

Discussion around Norfolk County Council's track record of delivery to date:

Because the NCC can't manage the issues they have now so I don't see how another layer is going to change anything

Devolution depends on having the capacity to make good decisions, plan local development and utilise funds effectively and without waste. Norfolk County Council has not demonstrated these capacities in my view

- **Worse off (26)**

Discussion of any potential detrimental financial impacts of the Deal:

I do not believe it's in the best interests I believe the decisions should be made in parliament.

Not sure there will be any benefit long-term - this is just another way central government is reducing local financial support and transferring costs to counties to grapple with. Future costs are going to be much higher which will only mean higher rates or bankrupt council.

- **Accountability (24)**

Discussion of any potential detrimental financial impacts of the Deal:

Great concerns over a locally elected leader - too much power in the hands of one person is fraught with danger.

One person having all the power is not good. Councils not Mayors making the decisions please.

- **Duplication (24)**

Discussion of the potential for duplication of function within the Deal:

Having read all the information you have made available, this just seems an idea without any merit, apart from more costs, reduced efficiency and more money wasted.

Totally opposed to this idea and yet another level of bureaucracy and costly appointments paid for by the taxpayers. A mini dictator and a "A Khan for Norfolk"!!! You must be joking!!!

- **Undemocratic (22)**

Giving decision making power to a new body and a directly elected leader (DEL) is perceived as reducing democratic control.

If the Govt wants an Elected Leader to give Norfolk a seat at the table, this shows the voice of the District Leaders will be diminished. It is unnecessary and top heavy to put in more powers at the top. The Govt will just take notice of one person.

The whole thing is a waste of money, as it isn't a step towards better democratic representation for the people of Norfolk. We need Proportional Representation in council (and parliamentary) elections for that to happen.

- **Funds (21)**

Discussions around whether the Deal's proposed sum is enough to do what's proposed:

It's not real devolution and the monies involved are not that great. They don't appear to be index linked and is a very watered down version that does not provide the cost savings that could occur. The deal seems to be between NCC and the government and it appears that districts have been left out of the negotiations. This current deal should be rejected and a new deal should be struck for more monies

that are index linked and also offer cost savings by agreeing reorganisation to reduce the number of politicians and officers involved in local government in Norfolk.

The figures look good on paper but what will £20 million be worth in a few years' time?

- **Consultation (18)**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions:

I am gasping at the way these questions have been drafted. Did you get professional outside help to make these balanced?

Another leading question. Your question asks if I want to disagree with any benefits! Of course benefits must by very definition be good. The point is that the benefits must be weighed against the negatives. Devolution to a one party cabinet system is more of a slap in the face to anyone who does not agree with the politics of that cabinet.

8.2.3 Reasons Unsure (neither agree nor disagree)

In descending order of frequency of mentions, the broad themes from those respondents who were unsure whether to support or oppose the proposal were:

- **Potentially difficult conditions:**

The **terms** associated with the Deal have the potential to be unacceptable, with the impact of **politics** felt to be potentially of significant negative impact in the future (64 comments in total).

- **Failing to achieve any gains through added bureaucracy:**

Significant concern was expressed over the potential for **inefficiency** by introducing increased bureaucracy and added layers of decision-making. This was felt to be compounded by the inherent potential for **duplication** of function within the Deal. Further, related, negative comment focused on the perceptions of a poor performance **record** of the county council which did not promote confidence in the ability to deliver the Deal (29 comments in total).

- **Futureproofing governance:**

Concern over the extent to which the Deal provides for the opportunity for local people to have a direct involvement in decisions through local democratic arrangements making the leader **accountable** once the agreement is made with Government (15 comments in total).

- **Is the Deal worth it:**

Reservations over the extent to which the **resources** offered under the Deal are sufficient to deliver the additional devolved responsibilities and will the **funds** continue to be available in the future; 30 years is a long time (14 comments in total).

- **Consultation:**
Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions (11 comments).
- **Intelligence:**
Direction of activity and allocations based on local knowledge about the specifics of the area (6 comments).

8.2.3.1 Codes (unsure)

From the comments provided by respondents who were unsure about the proposals the ten most frequently occurring codes used to develop the themes were:

NB: the numbers in brackets against each represents the total number of comments that make up the code. Representative quotes are included to illustrate the sentiment expressed.

- **Terms (46)**

Discussions around the terms set out on the deal between central and local government, considering the adequacy/ reasonableness of the offer.

I strongly agree with devolution principles but not on the terms currently set by Central Government which sadly appear to be more about further red tape/top down bureaucracy & political opportunism rather than democratic sustainable development.

There is not enough info to make this conclusion.

- **Politics (18)**

The perceived negative impact of the increased politicisation of decision-making:

I am very much on the fence on the whole question. There are elements which i think may be beneficial, and others which are likely to lead to more provincial local politics.

Part of me is concerned that it will just be another bureaucratic exercise ...that will (be) reversed in the near future.

- **Inefficiency (17)**

Increased bureaucracy and added layers of decision-making seen as a diversion of resources:

I am worried that this will end up being jobs for the boys so to speak however if the representation was without bias then I would be in agreement.

Not sure I understand it fully but I have concerns that it could just be another bright idea where lots of money is pumped into it but there is very little to show for it.

- **Accountability (15)**

Does the Deal provide an opportunity for local people to have a direct involvement in decisions through local democratic arrangements?

I think there are too many unknowns and too many unanswered questions even after speaking to council officers at the consultation events. I don't want Norfolk to miss out but not so I want us tied into a 30 year deal, 20million won't seem that much in 30 years.. Until we have fairer democratic elections such as proportional representation which might encourage more collaborative working I have reservations about devolving more power.

It will only be as good as the people in charge.

- **Consultation (11)**

Reservations over agreeing with the proposals based on perceived bias in the consultation questions or the lack of sufficient information to make an informed choice:

I am not sufficiently sure about the pros and cons of this issue.

Once again a question designed to elicit the answer desired. You appear to be asking whether I agree with the principles (even though you've misspelled it) and benefits of devolution. But the answer will be interpreted as implying support for this specific flavour of devolution.

- **Record (8)**

Discussion around Norfolk County Council's track record of delivery to date:

I'm yet to be convinced it brings any benefits. I don't think the councils employ the right kind of people to deal with that scenario.

- **Funds (7)**

Discussions around whether the Deal's proposed sum is enough to deliver what's proposed:

£20 million a year is not much for a county the size of Norfolk, especially when current deficits are taken into account.

Agree with devolution but think Norfolk should get a better deal financially or have a very strong promise that this will improve in the near future.

- **Resources (7)**

The resources made available under the deal - will they be enough/new/available?

Will the government give on one hand and take back with another so overall we are not £20m better off?

The funding expressed as a percentage of the current County budget is just over 1% of the budget.

- **Intelligence (6)**

Local knowledge about the specifics of the area:

It makes sense to have funding more central to Norfolk providing the funds.

- **Duplication (4)**

Concerns over the potential for introducing additional bureaucracy resulting in a likely duplication of function within the Deal:

I am not sure how more layers necessarily means better services. It rather begs the question - if we are to have Mayors (or whatever you want to call them) then what are MP's for? Why is Government getting larger and larger? I see no improvements over the last 30 years; things are not better despite an ever expanding Civil Service. It all sounds like a good idea but I am sceptical. If we are to make decisions and manage ourselves, why is Westminster not being slimmed down?

Norfolk's voice doesn't seem to be heard now despite all the Tory MPs that we have. Are we supposed to believe that this would change?

9 APPENDIX ONE: RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Set out below are the responses provided by respondents to standard demographic questions asked by Norfolk County Council.

Responses to this were purely voluntary and not all respondents chose to provide their details.

Please note that percentages are shown for the total response (1,211) not the total of those who provided information.

9.1 Sex

Option	No.	%
Male	575	47.48%
Female	536	44.26%
Prefer not to say	59	4.87%
Prefer to self-describe	4	0.33%
Total	1,174	96.94%

9.2 Age

Option	No.	%
Under 18	1	0.08%
18-24	14	1.16%
25-34	76	6.28%
35-44	113	9.33%
45-54	212	17.51%
55-64	289	23.86%
65-74	276	22.79%
75-84	103	8.51%
85 or older	6	0.50%
Prefer not to say	86	7.10%
Not Answered	35	2.89%
Total	1,211	100%

9.3 Longterm illness, disability or limiting health problem

Option	No.	%
Yes	191	15.77%
No	872	72.01%
Prefer not to say	106	8.75%
Not Answered	42	3.47%
Total	1,211	100%

- 237 respondents provided further detail of their disability.

Option	No.	%
Blind or partially sighted	8	0.66%
D/deaf or hard of hearing	22	1.82%
Limiting health condition e.g., heart disease, asthma, strokes, osteoarthritis,	68	5.62%
Rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia and myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) etc.	35	2.89%
Learning Disabilities	7	0.58%
Neurodiversity e.g., autistic spectrum disorders, dyslexia, dyspraxia	30	2.48%
Mental health conditions – e.g., depression, schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorders, eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder	39	3.22%
Physical disability e.g., limb disorder, amputee, wheelchair user, cerebral palsy, motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy	38	3.14%
Prefer not to say	81	6.69%
Not Answered	974	80.43%

9.4 Ethnicity

1,049 individuals answered in total with separate tables presented below for each group.

Option	No.	%
Asian British	7	0.58%
Indian	4	0.33%
Pakistani	1	0.08%
Bangladeshi	0	0.00%
Chinese	1	0.08%
Not Answered	1,198	98.93%

Option	No.	%
Black British	3	0.25%
Caribbean	0	0.00%
African	1	0.08%
Not Answered	1,207	99.67%

Option	No.	%
White and Black Caribbean	0	0%
White and Black African	1	0.08%
White and Asian	4	0.33%
Not Answered	1,206	99.59%

Option	No.	%
English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, or British	1,020	84.23%
Irish	6	0.50%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	1	0.08%
Roma	0	0%
Not Answered	184	15.19%

Option	No.	%
Arab	0	0%
Not Answered	1,211	100%

9.5 Response by District

Option	No.	%
Breckland	154	12.72%
Broadland	221	18.25%
Great Yarmouth	73	6.03%
Kings Lynn and West Norfolk	153	12.63%
North Norfolk	166	13.71%
Norwich	189	15.61%
South Norfolk	206	17.01%
Not Answered	49	4.05%

9.6 Caring Responsibilities

Option	No.	%
No	853	70.44%
Yes – for children with additional needs	37	3.06%
Yes – for older family members	129	10.65%
Yes – other	96	7.93%
Not Answered	96	7.93%

9.7 Employment Status

Option	Total	Percent
Employed (full time)	438	36.17%
Employed (part time)	130	10.73%
Self employed	106	8.75%
Unemployed	9	0.74%
Student	8	0.66%
Looking after the family home	22	1.82%
Long-term sick	24	1.98%
Retired	417	34.43%
Not Answered	57	4.71%

9.8 Language

Option	Total	Percent
English	1,127	93.06%
Not Answered	84	6.94%

9.9 (Language) Other, please write in the box below:

There were 25 responses to this part of the question

ANNEXE TWO:**STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC RESPONDENT
SUBMISSIONS REPORT**



Norfolk County Council

County Deal Consultation

Stakeholder and Public Respondent Submissions Report

27 April 2023

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Norfolk County Council commissioned the Consultation Institute (tCI) to analyse the responses received from stakeholder organisations and members of the public as part of the consultation on County Deal devolution arrangements for Norfolk.

This report sets out the results of that stakeholder analysis and is separate to the report detailing the online survey results.

1.2 Responses

The responses analysed in this short report came from three main sources:

- Responses submitted to the online survey as official representation of opinion by a stakeholder organisation
- Responses submitted to the online survey where individuals mentioned the organisation they worked for when they were asked the basis on which they were responding
- Written submissions to the consultation provided in the form of letters or emails

The stakeholder organisations making these submissions are shown in the table on the following page.

In addition to the stakeholder responses, submissions were also made directly to the consultation via the Have Your Say portal from members of the public.

Response submitted by Letter	Response submitted by survey	Responses submitted by survey (where individuals mentioned the organisation they worked for)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aviva • Breckland District Council¹ • Dereham Deaf Group • Great Yarmouth BC • Hempnall Parish Council • Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council • NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board • Norfolk Youth Parliament • Norwich Airport • Norwich City Council • Norwich Research Park • South Norfolk Council⁶ • Wells-next-the-sea Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albanwise Wallace Estates • Aylsham Town Council • Broadland District Council • Broadland Agricultural Water Abstractors Group (BAWAG) • Breckland District Council • Burroughes Business Developments Ltd • Chadwicks • Chemanglia Ltd • Discover King's Lynn (King's Lynn BID Ltd) • Eaton Rise Residents' Association • epos now • East Norfolk Transport Users As. • Exchange Vintage • Fakenham Area Conservation Team • Felthorpe Parish Council • Institute of Directors • T Gabriel insurance ltd (Financial services) • Fransham Parish Council • fsg signs & graphics ltd • Harleston Heritage Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BoxcoUK Limited • Brancaster Parish Council • Briningham Parish Council • CCB Mining Consultant • Chair of Governors The Nicholas Hamond Academy Swaffham • Charity trust • Coast and Countryside • Connected Energy LTD • Construction consultancy company • Creative Arts East • Credit Suisse • Cromer Community Shed (AKA Men's Shed) • Diocese of Ely • Docking Parish Council • East Anglia Bylines (citizen journalism) • Easton Parish Council • Eco-boat • Elector • Engage with Business Ltd • Ethnic fusion fine foods ltd • Farming Company • Felthorpe Lakes

⁶ Letter and survey submitted

Response submitted by Letter	Response submitted by survey	Responses submitted by survey (where individuals mentioned the organisation they worked for)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hemp Innovations Ltd • Hethel Innovation Ltd • Holme-next-the-Sea Parish Council • Kaimai Ltd • Kenninghall Parish Council • Keswick & Intwood Parish Council • Lewes Workspace Ltd • Little Dunham Parish Council • Middleton Towers Railway Preservation Ltd • Moore Networking Limited • National Lottery Heritage Fund • New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership⁷ • New-U Enterprises Ltd • Norfolk Seaweed Ltd • Norfolk-tours • Norfolk Chamber of Commerce • North Norfolk District Council • Padmaloka - FWBO (Surlingham) • PCL Ceramics • Potter Heigham Parish Council • Reflex Theatre Ltd. • Rocollec Ltd 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feltwell Parish Council • Flagship Group • Fritton with St Olaves Parish Council • Healthwatch Norfolk • Hemsby Co-op • Hingham Town Council • Homes for Wells • Ingoldisthorpe Parish Council • Kettlestone Parish Council • Kinship • KLWNBUG The Norfolk and Fens Cycling Campaign • 'Law Firm' • Lisa and Neil wedding photography • LisaRose Crafts • LittlePiggy Associates Ltd • Lotus Cars Ltd • Mayes and Co Limited • Mind • Norfolk Residents Panel • Norwich BID • Norwich school of hair and beauty • Reepham Town Council • Roleshare

⁷ Comment from respondent: *I am responding with my own personal opinions but I have to declare an interest in so far as I am the Deputy Chair of New Anglia LEP*

Response submitted by Letter	Response submitted by survey	Responses submitted by survey (where individuals mentioned the organisation they worked for)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Norfolk District Council • Sandra Reynolds Agency and East Coast Design Studio • Sandringham Windows Norfolk Ltd • Saul D Humphrey LLP • Seahorse Guest house • Tarmac Holdings • The Feed • The Norwich School of Hair & Beauty • Thomas Paine hotel • Thorpe St Andrew Town Council • Thrive • University of East Anglia • Uttings Insurance Brokers • Valeo Snackfoods • Visit East of England • Voluntary Norfolk • Westcotec Ltd • Wicklewood Parish Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Instrument Services • St Martins Housing • Support for Success - Corporate Parenting • Taverham High School • Taxi Company • Team Jones Design • The Corn Hall • THK • Tilney All Saints Parish Council • Walsingham Parish Council • West Earlham Dental Health Practice • Weston Longville Parish Council • Wickmere Parish Council • Woodton Parish Council • Wroxham and District u3a • Zebu Consulting Ltd

2 SURVEY RESPONSES

2.1 Introduction

In this section we revisit the survey responses to understand if there was a difference in support for each of the proposals with the Deal between:

- All responses submitted to the online survey.
- Responses submitted to the online survey as official representation of opinion by a stakeholder organisation.
- Responses submitted to the online survey where individuals mentioned the organisation they worked for.

We discuss in turn each of the key components in the Deal to establish if there is a difference in quantitative opinion⁸.

What is clear from the consideration is that the approval levels for all proposals are higher from those representing or identifying with organisations than with the wider respondent base.

2.2 Local control of money devolved from Government

When considering the response to the question:

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

It becomes clear that agreement is higher amongst those who identify with or represent an organisation than the general responses:

- Overall agreement is at 64%
- For those representing an organisation it is 71%
- Those who identify with an organisation are 73% in agreement

Response	Overall		Organisations		Individual identifying with Organisation	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agree	774	64%	37	71%	47	73%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	113	9%	5	10%	3	5%
Disagree	290	24%	9	17%	14	22%
Don't Know	23	2%	-	-	-	-
Not Answered	11	1%	1	2%	-	-
Total	1,211⁹	100%	52	100%	64	100%

⁸ We have not revisited the qualitative data due to the relatively small sample size.

⁹ Please note that the overall figure contains both additional categories compared in this table and should be treated with appropriate caution

2.3 Local business voice for Norfolk

When considering the responses to the question:

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

The pattern of higher levels of agreement from organisations continues with:

- Overall agreement at 60%
- For those representing an organisation it is at 69%
- Those who identify with an organisation are 75% in agreement

Response	Overall		Organisations		Individual identifying with Organisation	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agree	726	60%	36	69%	48	75%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	167	14%	4	8%	3	5%
Disagree	284	23%	9	17%	13	20%
Don't Know	18	2%	3	6%	-	-
Not Answered	16	1%	-	-	-	-
Total	1,211	100%	52	100%	64	100%

2.4 Adult education

The same pattern continues when considering responses to the question:

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

- Overall agreement is at 65%
- For those representing an organisation it is at 69%
- Those who identify with an organisation are 70% in agreement

Response	Overall		Organisations		Individual identifying with Organisation	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agree	793	65%	36	69%	45	70%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	139	11%	4	8%	5	8%
Disagree	248	20%	9	17%	13	20%
Don't Know	17	1%	3	6%	-	-
Not Answered	14	1%	-	-	1	2%
Total	1,211	100%	52	100%	64	100%

2.5 Housing and employment

When considering the responses to the question:

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

The pattern of higher level of agreement once again continues with:

- Overall agreement at 55%
- For those representing an organisation it is at 67%
- Those who identify with an organisation are 66% in agreement

Response	Overall		Organisations		Individual identifying with Organisation	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agree	669	55%	35	67%	42	66%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	182	15%	6	12%	9	14%
Disagree	326	27%	8	15%	13	20%
Don't Know	18	2%	-	-	-	-
Not Answered	16	1%	3	6%	-	-
Total	1,211	100%	52	100%	64	100%

2.6 Integrated Transport

Once again the same pattern continues when considering responses to the question:

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

- Overall agreement is at 66%
- For those representing an organisation it is at 71%
- Those who identify with an organisation are 70% in agreement

Response	Overall		Organisations		Individual identifying with Organisation	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agree	797	66%	37	71%	45	70%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	152	13%	6	12%	8	13%
Disagree	226	19%	6	12%	10	16%
Don't Know	18	1%	-	-	1	1%
Not Answered	18	1%	3	5%	-	-
Total	1,211	100%	52	100%	64	100%

2.7 Elected Leader and cabinet

When considering the responses to the question:

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

The pattern of higher agreement once again continues with:

- Overall agreement at 50%
- For those representing an organisation it is at 54%
- Those who identify with an organisation are 53% in agreement

Response	Overall		Organisations		Individual identifying with Organisation	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agree	608	50%	28	54%	34	53%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	202	17%	7	13%	10	16%
Disagree	372	31%	13	25%	19	30%
Don't Know	16	1%	-	-	1	2%
Not Answered	13	1%	4	8%	-	-
Total	1,211	100%	52	100%	64	100%

2.8 Principles of devolution

When considering the responses to the question:

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

The pattern of higher agreement once again continues with:

- Overall agreement at 57%
- For those representing an organisation it is at 65%
- Those who identify with an organisation are 61% in agreement

Response	Overall		Organisations		Individual identifying with Organisation	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agree	691	57%	34	65%	39	61%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	182	15%	8	15%	12	19%
Disagree	292	24%	7	13%	12	19%
Don't Know	24	2%	-	-	1	2%
Not Answered	22	2%	3	6%	-	-
Total	1,211	100%	52	100%	64	100%

3 WRITTEN STAKEHOLDER SUBMISSIONS

In total 13 responses were received from stakeholders, either via letter or email. In addition Norfolk County Council has identified an additional five responses submitted to the survey identified as key stakeholders and are considered separately in this section. These responses were from:

1. Aviva
2. Breckland District Council
3. Broadland
4. Broadland District Council
5. Dereham Deaf Group
6. Great Yarmouth Borough Council
7. Hempnall Parish Council
8. Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council
9. New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership
10. NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board
11. Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
12. Norfolk Youth Parliament
13. North Norfolk District Council
14. Norwich Airport
15. Norwich City Council
16. Norwich Research Park
17. South Norfolk Council
18. University of East Anglia
19. Wells-next-the-sea Council

These break down into the following categories, which we have used in reporting opinion:

District and City Council:

- Breckland District Council
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council
- Norwich City Council
- Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council
- South Norfolk Council
- North Norfolk District Council

Parish Council:

- Wells-next-the-sea Council
- Hempnall Parish Council

Major Employers:

- Norwich Airport
- Norwich Research Park
- Aviva

Statutory Partner:

- NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board

Other Key Stakeholder Groups:

- Dereham Deaf Group
- New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership
- Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
- Norfolk Youth Parliament
- University of East Anglia

Set out below is a summary and thematic analysis of responses from these stakeholder groups.

3.1 Overall Comments

3.1.1 District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** welcome the concept of devolution and highlighted the key aspects of support:
 - Devolving more powers locally was welcomed, allowing the tackling of challenges around skills and transport more effectively.
 - Devolving funding over a long-term basis
 - Creating the ability to form new functions like Development Corporations.

However, the following concerns were raised:

- The Deal overlooks the important role of District Councils, including their role as housing and planning authorities.
- Concerns that the proposal misses the opportunity of a Mayoral Combined Authority which would have County and District at the decision-making table. This was framed with particular reference to the potential to undermine the existing Enterprise Zones.
- Reservations around the proposed Directly Elected Leader (DEL) model. Citing the advantages of the tried and trusted Mayoral model used elsewhere in the country.
- The proposed Deal lacks ambition, both in comparison with previously agreed devolution deals and the Government's own policy as set out in the Levelling Up White Paper. The proposed Deal is felt to miss significant opportunities normally associated with Level 3 including mayoral control of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).
- Following a discussion at full Council, **King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council** is reserving its final position until the final debate and decision at Norfolk County Council and no further correspondence was received. The letter sets out three key areas of consideration following the County Council decision in December 2023:
 - King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council's powers and sovereignty will remain undiminished;
 - West-Norfolk will have a fair say in the priorities being set for any new funding under the 'deal'; and

- West-Norfolk will have a fair opportunity to access such funding.
- **South Norfolk Council** supports the principles of devolution and the benefits it can bring but believe the proposed Deal does not stand up to scrutiny. Citing a directly elected Mayoral Combined Authority as the preferred option for the future which:
 - Avoids the creation of an 8th structure of local government, which is only applicable to Norfolk and Suffolk
 - Allows for the widest possible and equal participation which includes district councils, with all the powers needed to strategically plan and deliver pulling in the same direction
 - Brings stability, not just politically, but financially.
 - Is more ambitious, embedded in a strong, collaborative, tried and tested governance model – *“which would allow us to deliver more, further and faster”*
- **Norwich City Council** wrote to set out its position *“as a matter of principle, the city council supports the devolution of powers, responsibilities, and funding from central to local government.”* However, the city council does not feel the devolution deal on offer goes far enough, is not ambitious enough, and is too generic. It doesn't reflect some of the unique needs of the region and the offer Norfolk can make to government in terms of housing; industry and commerce; agriculture; skills; energy and carbon reduction. In that sense, it represents a missed opportunity.

The city council took an overall view of the consultation that in the absence of any realistic likelihood of the government changing its approach to devolution away from its standard template tactic, the city council's focus now is on getting the best of what's on offer for the city, which will also benefit the wider county.

It's clear from the recent devolution deals in places such as Yorkshire and the East Midlands that the government's approach to devolution follows a standard template – a suite of fairly limited powers devolved to upper tier authorities, together with an investment fund of c£20m a year for 30 years, with some one-off money for housing and development. This standard template forms the basis of the deal offered to Norfolk, which makes it generic and underwhelming.

3.1.2 Parish Councils

- **Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council** wrote:

Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council has considered the Norfolk Devolution Deal and has significant concerns.

Therefore Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council does not support the deal.

- **Hempnall Parish Council** opposes the County Deal for Norfolk based on the introduction of an extra layer of bureaucracy, the Police and Crime Commissioner was cited as a similar unwarranted local overhead.

The Deal is seen as ‘bribe’ to accept Government’s offer, with no reason being provided why offered investment cannot be delivered through existing structures.

3.1.3 Major Employers

- **Aviva** wrote to support the proposed devolution deal, focusing on opportunities to improve skills, invest in infrastructure and housing and to deliver an economic plan over the long term. The scope for public private partnership was highlighted alongside complementary commitments to achieving net zero. Aviva welcome the opportunity for continued partnership working and to contribute to the consultation on the proposed Deal.
- **Norwich Research Park (NRP)** wrote to support the proposed Deal, highlighting areas of ongoing research and the potential for enhanced opportunities through attraction and retention of high growth businesses.
- **Norwich Airport** wrote to support the Deal, viewed as providing:
 - greater decision-making powers and resources to local leaders and communities.
 - a much-needed boost to our region's infrastructure, allowing for improved transport links and greater investment in emerging industries.

3.1.4 Other Key Stakeholders

- **Norfolk Youth Parliament** reported support for the Deal and that young people liked the idea of having the leader of Norfolk County Council that is a councillor elected by members of the public.

3.2 Comments regarding the consultation on the Deal

3.2.1 District and City Councils

- **South Norfolk Council** wrote to express disappointment at the timing of the consultation exercise. This was expressed as two linked issues:
 - The consultation questions which are felt to be leading and fail to separate the general principles of devolution from the specific details of the proposed Deal.
 - The timing of the consultation, which is felt to be premature and lacking in detail, particularly around the governance arrangement associated with a Directly Elected Leader.

The council expressed disappointment in the lack of involvement in development and opportunities for coproduction of the proposed Deal.

3.3 Local control of money devolved from Government

3.3.1 Borough, District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** strongly agreed with the proposal and wrote to express concern that the investment pot 'while generous compared to nothing' is significantly below the needs of the areas and will not begin to address the underfunding experienced in parts of Norfolk ongoing for some time.

In addition the council made the following points:

- The proposed governance model does not fully utilise local decision makers. The proposed DEL structure means that only Norfolk County Council will have decision making powers over the Norfolk Investment Fund. Breckland state a preference for all borough, city, and district councils to be part of the decision-making process, utilising all local leaders and their expertise, ensuring better outcomes are delivered for residents.

District councils in England deliver 86 out of 137 essential local government services. As the housing and planning authorities, they hold most of the critical levers in terms of Levelling Up and are the effective 'super-connectors' between the tiers of local government, government agencies, and local people and businesses.

- There was a further statement in support of a Mayoral rather than DEL structure:

We see a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) as the ideal model to ensure that all councils in Norfolk are utilised effectively and given a say in the decision-making process. The MCA model would also allow for all partners together to lever borrowing through bespoke development corporations, for example. This could have the

significant increased benefit of leveraging any debt against a much bigger asset pool.

- The overall funding in the Deal and the failure to take into account any inflationary pressures on the available budget:

In terms of the actual funding amounts being delivered, whilst we recognise that the Norfolk Investment Fund is on par per head with other devolution deals agreed, it is evident that other areas have secured more ambitious funding levels for their regions. 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. It is also worth noting that, unlike other areas of the country, we are a net contributor to HMT – and so it is already well established that our area delivers a strong ROI for the UK.

- **Broadland District Council** strongly agreed with the proposal on the basis that it is the only Deal available to Norfolk to enable better outcomes for residents and businesses. Broadland also believes that Norfolk should have maximum devolution based on:
 - Being the biggest deal with the most powers.
 - Involving and engaging all the principal authorities.
 - Building on the tried and tested model for devolution.

There were, however, a number of reservations expressed around this support:

- *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 more collaborative model which would allow for all councils in Norfolk to work together in partnership 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 a constituent role to play.*

- *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 £ 30 m – this does not take into account the inflationary impact of this financial year.*
-
- **Great Yarmouth Borough Council:** wrote to make several points on the proposed financial settlement in the proposed Deal:
 - £600m over the next 30 years is investment into the County is welcome, but there are concerns that the sum is not index-linked and when calculating a discounted cashflow the real investment sum becomes much reduced. Therefore, a request is made that Norfolk County Council, Norfolk MPs and District Leaders continue to lobby government for an improved deal, and as a minimum to have an inflationary index-linked deal.
 - The County Deal provides the opportunity to unlock some capacity funding and Great Yarmouth Borough Council wish to see an early dialogue on how that capacity funding and future revenue funding could and should be used to drive forward an investment plan with strong and effective governance. However, it does nothing to address any existing capital investment deficits.
 - **Norwich City Council** wrote to set out its position on the financial settlement in the Deal. The funding will not fix the financial struggles that all councils in the region are facing. It won't help plug the county council's £60m budget gap, nor the city's £10m gap over the next four years.
-

The city council and county council must be at one in lobbying Whitehall to make good on its promises to fix local government funding and not allow any devolution deal to be used as a cover story. While the government's devo template may help provide some funding for infrastructure, it's not going to help us protect local services and we must continue to be vocal

about that. Levelling up must ensure that people services – health, education, social care and skills – are adequately funded too.

The City Council also argue that Norwich is the economic and cultural powerhouse not just of the county but of the wider region. The future success of Norfolk is held to be dependent on the future success and prosperity of Norwich.

Devolution needs to benefit the unique attributes of the city and contribute to their further development. It will be crucial for the city council and county council - under the proposed directly elected leader model - to work together to ensure that Norwich gets its fair share of the devolution prize in order to drive growth and prosperity for the local and regional economy. City council officers will work to develop business cases for investment so that the benefits of devolution can make a visible difference in housing, industry, transport, carbon reduction and environmental enhancement.

- **North Norfolk District Council** strongly agrees with and welcomes the principles behind a Devolution Deal for Norfolk, with powers and funding over infrastructure issues and key service provision being transferred from Whitehall to Norfolk.
-

The District Council recognises that the current “Deal” being offered by Government is a first step and that in other areas of the country, where devolution is already in place, powers over additional functions and responsibilities and further devolved funding often follow. We therefore aspire for Norfolk to secure the best devolution deal possible, with as many powers as possible being devolved to the County so that decisions over locally developed proposals, which meet the needs of our residents and businesses, can be taken within Norfolk.

North Norfolk District Council recognises that the proposed 30-year £600million Norfolk Investment Fund, against which delivery of our Levelling Up ambitions might be realised locally, is “additional” funding for Norfolk and welcomes this in principle. However, whilst this proposal might appear generous, or a lot of money to many of the County’s residents, this only equates to approximately £21.00 per head per annum of additional money to the County. It also needs to be seen in the context of significant financial pressures and service cuts having to be considered by many public service providers in Norfolk at the present time.

It is also not clear how these additional funds would be allocated across the County, where, in recent times, much investment has been in the Greater Norwich and Great Yarmouth areas, with the needs of many rural parts of the County – including North Norfolk, seemingly being overlooked. The District Council is concerned that without a deeper understanding of how decisions around spending the County Deal (Norfolk Investment Fund) monies might be taken there is a risk that the gap between more successful and lagging parts of the County might

grow rather than be narrowed, as proposed through the Government's wider Levelling Up agenda.

North Norfolk faces many challenges in this respect which it would be hoped might be addressed through any County Deal. These include the capacity of the local electricity distribution network, water scarcity, access and cost of transport to post-16 education and training, the health and social care challenges of meeting the needs of an ageing rural population, affordability of housing for many local people of working age. However, the District Council does not understand, based on funding decisions over many years by Central Government and the County Council, how the real needs of places such as North Norfolk will be addressed through the governance model proposed - particularly as the roles, powers, responsibilities and functions of district councils do not appear to be properly considered and reflected in the Directly Elected Leader model. North Norfolk District Council (with the exception of the Conservative Opposition Group which reserves its position on the governance model to be adopted) therefore believes that a better model to support delivery of a County Deal for Norfolk would be that of an elected mayor and Combined Mayoral Authority

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- **South Norfolk Council (SNC)** strongly disagree with this proposal. SNC do not disagree that Norfolk should have more control of devolved funding, stating that Norfolk should have maximum devolution, involving and engaging all principal authorities and built upon a tried and tested model. However, the specifics of the proposal are believed to result in a materially worse proposition than is available elsewhere in terms of both money and powers; SNC made the following points:
 - SNC disagrees with the proposal that Norfolk County Council will 'use and control the new Norfolk Investment Fund' through a directly elected leader model, which only allows for one of the eight principal authorities in Norfolk to make critical decisions. Norfolk's city, borough and district councils are the powerhouses and engine rooms for delivery across the county, working collaboratively, effectively and at pace to improve the lives of our communities. The deal takes a focus on the delivery of Levelling Up through the key levers of housing, growth and planning. To deliver this, it must use the functions and role of district councils who control these powers.
 - The proposal is unclear on governance of existing LEP assets, where SNC has significant investments and revenue opportunities around the enterprise zone. Unless and until these are clarified, SNC cannot support this proposal.
 - The current deal for Norfolk could be more ambitious and the funding amount of £20m per year should 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. To reach the same per head figure and relative value, the Norfolk Deal would have to be worth more than £30m, a figure that does not take into account the inflationary impact of this financial year.
 - The County also needs the ability to leverage greater levels of investment through the covenant strength of all partners. This can only be achieved by

severing links with the financial drag of the County (social care services in particular) and establishing a Mayoral Combined Authority governance model.

3.3.2 Major Employers

- **Norwich Airport** wrote to confirm its belief that with increased autonomy and funding, Norfolk will be better equipped to address the unique challenges facing our region, from promoting economic growth and job creation to improving the overall quality of life for residents.
- **Norwich Research Park** highlighted their existing activity to attract research funding, inward and private sector investment and highlighted the opportunity for further partnership working under the proposed devolution Deal.

3.3.3 Statutory Partner

- **NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board (ICB)** wrote to explain that, although vital, the NHS only accounts for a fraction of health and wellbeing. The rest depends on other things: genetics, our environment - whether we have decent work, enough money, close family and friends, a warm home, clean air - and our own lifestyles. The County Deal for Norfolk contains significant and very welcome funding which would help them to address some of these wider determinants of health.

The Integrated Care Board welcomes not just the additional funding, but the ambitions set out in the deal to improve housing, reduce carbon emissions, support active transport, help people get the skills they need and into good jobs. Taking further action on these issues would help to improve local people's health and wellbeing, as well as make good on their commitments to prioritise prevention, reduce health inequalities and enable resilient communities, as set out in their Integrated Care Strategy for Norfolk and Waveney.

3.3.4 Other Key Stakeholders

- **Norfolk Chambers of Commerce** strongly agreed with the proposal identifying that at present the county has to compete for funding against large areas such as the Northern Powerhouse and the Midlands Engine, and as a rural area the business case does not always compare well against large urban areas. The ability to control our own budget, means we spend it where is to most needed across Norfolk, rather than having to justify why we deserve the funding more than another UK location.

- **Norfolk Youth Parliament:** Generally young people were supportive of the devolution Deal as it brings more money and opportunities to Norfolk. Young people would like to see the money being spent on children and young people as much as possible, to show investment in their futures. Young people set the following spending priorities:

- Community engagement and cohesion within communities and culture
- Support for engaging with further education
- Environmental priorities
- City and town centres

- Spaces for young people, universal services for young people and open youth provision
- Well-being and mental health services
- Transport: for young people to be independent they need a good bus service and for those rurally isolated, a service that runs till late.
- Units where families affected by things like dementia can spend time with their family as it is not always nice for them in the care homes where they reside.
- **Dereham Deaf Group** held a group discussion in which they set out their main priority as ensuring Norfolk County Council direct funds to help them. They do not feel the Deal will help in this area; however, their key investment priorities are to see:
 - more organisations who can help with Advocacy in their language BSL
 - hubs in Norfolk, with Advocacy in their language BSL so that people not in or around Norwich or King's Lynn can actually get help.

A plea was also made for commissioners to co-produce services with Deaf and Deafblind people from start to finish.

- The **New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership** agreed with the proposal and wrote to express a firm belief in devolution of funding and powers to local areas. Funding and powers are controlled more centrally in England than in comparable economies. This was viewed as stifling local enterprise and growth, meaning local partners have to adopt short term approaches to secure central Government funding rather than focus on longer term local priorities.

The £20m a year investment fund is welcomed. The deal secured by Norfolk is comparable with other areas and a good start, but UEA would be keen to see further funding and powers devolved in further deals, as has happened in other parts of the country.

- The **University of East Anglia** (UEA) strongly agreed with the proposal and wrote stating Norfolk's needs are distinct from its neighbouring counties. While there is commonality of need to a degree with Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex, if able to tailor policy and target investment to the specific needs of the county to develop a bespoke socio-economic strategy, Norfolk would be able to unlock the tremendous potential on offer here.

-
- *Devolution has the capacity to deliver better understanding of Norfolk's place-based needs. Norfolk requires policy delivery based on a higher granularity of detail regarding the socio-economic needs and opportunities within and across our region – and the linkages and interdependencies that can be proactively managed to ensure greater effectiveness and efficiency of public spending.*
 - *Recent examples of the enabling effect of policy and investment opportunities in areas that already have regional devolution show the potential that Norfolk could enjoy in the future (e.g. investment zones announced in the March 2023 Budget). If devolution can deliver more*

autonomy in the County Council's revenue raising capacity, legitimised by electoral accountability, the region is likely to benefit.

- *However, where there is established effective collaboration across the wider East of England – for instance through activity driven by the LEP like the Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board or UEA's Health and Social Care Partnership – attention should be paid to ensure this work across the wider region should be supported or renewed under any new arrangements. New funding regimes must support those services that cross county borders.*
- *The East of England is a net contributor to HM Treasury but currently loses out in place-based investment decisions taken in Westminster. Devolution has the potential to align political objectives and enable swifter, more opportunistic delivery and therefore benefit from more executive governance. Devolution will gift the Directly Elected Leader of Norfolk County Council a louder voice within Whitehall.*

3.4 Local business voice for Norfolk

3.4.1 Borough, District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** agreed with the proposal supporting the concept of a strong business voice, and for the role of business and business leaders in helping shape policy and interventions. There were, however, reservations expressed on the lack of recognition of the proposed Deal to represent the diversity of businesses and economies in Norfolk, a role district, borough and city councils could actively assist in, which is overlooked in the current proposals.

The preference for a Mayoral Combined Authority structure for business support was also expressed:

We believe the integration of the functions of the LEP should be supported; however, this would be more beneficial if the governance model was that of a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA). The LEP's previous success was down to how it championed a collaborative way of working across all partners, including district councils such as Breckland. District councils have control of the key levers of economic growth, such as housing and planning, and therefore should be involved in working collaboratively to support businesses and economic growth, as is currently done with the LEP, via an MCA model or similar.

- **Broadland District Council** agreed with the proposal making the following comments:

We agree 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 more collaborative governance model 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.

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.

-
- **Great Yarmouth Borough Council** state their preference for a Mayoral Combined Authority model of governance which would have embodied the functions of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP); without such governance the future of the LEP and its assets remains a concern. Clarification of future ownership is urgently required and Great Yarmouth Borough Council would expect to see these held within a joint company with District Councils.
 - **North Norfolk District Council** agrees that there should be a strong “business voice” in any County Deal agreed for Norfolk as a key stakeholder community in Norfolk’s future growth and prosperity.

It isn’t clear to the Council however, how such a voice would be heard through the existing LEP functions and responsibilities being “absorbed” into the County Council.

North Norfolk District Council (with the exception of the Conservative Opposition Group which reserves its position on the governance model to be adopted) would have a strong preference for any County Deal for Norfolk operating through a Combined Mayoral Authority structure. This would allow the existing LEP functions to be recognised as a key stakeholder body in its own right alongside the District and County councils so that the voice of business could be heard directly by the elected mayor

North Norfolk District Council is however supportive of the principle of the separation of the current LEP structures which cover Norfolk and Suffolk, allowing greater focus on the needs of Norfolk. This is because, whilst under the current arrangements the two counties share some common sectors and characteristics, North Norfolk District Council believes that the more remote, ‘end of the line’ geography of Norfolk in respect of utility, road, rail and broadband and mobile infrastructure, are

not always the focus of investment and initiatives taken forward by the New Anglia LEP, which covers the two counties

- **South Norfolk Council** strongly disagree with this proposal on the grounds shown below:
-

We believe that the devolution deal should be for the County of Norfolk, not for Norfolk County Council. By excluding districts, there will be no powers to achieve better planning, housing, cleaner environment, welfare or growth. This is clearly evident in the proposed removal of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund from districts, who are best placed with local insight and knowledge, to drive allocation of funding in the areas in need of growth.

Districts are the powerhouses for economic growth across the region – without the 86 powers districts bring, the Deal will fail immediately in delivery.

We disagree with the proposal that the LEP should be integrated into Norfolk County Council and strongly believe that the LEP needs to be fully integrated into a model which allows for full participation of all councils which hold the levers for growth. Districts own many of the LEP assets therefore folding the LEP into the County Council may not be a viable option.

Fully integrating the functions of the LEP into a model such as 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 Mayoral Combined Authority model provides a clear focus on delivering Levelling Up, without the conflict of interest of also needing to deliver statutory services of the County.

3.4.2 Major Employers

- **Norwich Research Park** believe that by working closely with a devolved Norfolk County Council, it can maximise the societal impact of publicly funded research, through the campus-wide enterprise strategy, attract inward private sector investment in high-growth business activity and ensure the development of compelling new facilities for exciting companies.
- **Norwich Airport** see the devolution deal as helping to create skilled jobs in areas such as technology, innovation, and renewable energy, ensuring that our region remains at the forefront of the UK's economic growth.

3.4.3 Other Key Stakeholders

- The **New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership** neither agreed nor

disagreed with the proposal and wrote to state it is not yet possible to say if the proposals will give Norfolk a stronger business voice, because at this stage the proposed structures, roles and powers of the Norfolk Business Board have yet to be determined.

The existing structure of New Anglia LEP as a partnership between all local authorities, the private sector and education has brought hundreds of millions of pounds of funding from Government and other sources into Norfolk. It has provided funding and support for thousands of Norfolk businesses, created thousands of jobs and has given business a key role in the development of activities and programmes to support business. It has championed the importance of enterprise and innovation within the county and raised the profile of the county nationally and internationally. For the deal to give Norfolk a stronger business voice it is critical that the key strengths of the LEP are built upon, and enhanced. As a minimum this would include:

1. **Maintaining a strong, effective and independent business voice.** To achieve this it is critical that the Business Board is proactively involved in the development and implementation of economic strategy and the decision making about programmes, funding and projects to support growth. Further that the sector groups and industry councils which provide a critical voice for business are maintained and strengthened. These groups, as well as the Business Board need to include representation from the universities and colleges of the county to ensure that their valuable input is maintained in decision making. Businesses understand what the barriers to growth and measures are needed to unlock investment, their expertise is critical in developing and managing programmes and interventions to boost local businesses.
2. **A suite of effective programmes to support businesses.** It would be a huge loss to the business community if the LEP's programmes were ended prematurely or interrupted. It is vital these programmes are protected, continued and enhanced as part of the county deal.
3. **An agile and entrepreneurial approach to support businesses.** The LEP board and executive have been able to respond to opportunities, take measured risks and support the local economy. This fleet of foot approach has enabled swifter, nimbler and more innovative business support.
4. **Cross county working should be preserved where possible.** Norfolk and Suffolk working together has brought significant benefits in areas such as energy and agri-food and areas such as innovation where critical mass has helped raise profile, enabled more to be done, secured additional funding and has driven efficiencies. Businesses do not work to local authority boundaries and those groups and councils already working cross county need to be maintained to ensure that the tangible benefits of such collaboration are not lost. Cross border partnership discussion should be encouraged to harmonise approaches around skills and other areas as much as possible.

- **Norfolk Chambers of Commerce** strongly agreed with the proposal writing the following:

 - *Whilst NALEP has done a good job for distribution of funding across Norfolk & Suffolk - we feel that the business community is not as well supported or listened to as it could be. A Business Board, purely for Norfolk gives the ability to reflect the true needs of the Norfolk business community. This also means that business support can be targeted where it is most needed across Norfolk, rather than the support being balanced across two counties.*

- The **University of East Anglia (UEA)** strongly agreed with the proposal and wrote the following:

 - *If the County Council engages stakeholders and businesses in its new strategies, and if those strategies are designed to be more bespoke to Norfolk's economic needs and opportunities, the policies and decisions that follow should be more closely aligned to the stakeholders' and businesses' objectives.*
 - *Businesses may be able to access policy processes more easily closer to home than engaging via Westminster where there is greater competition of voices.*
 - *Norfolk County Council must use its new powers and budget allocation to guard against parochialism. Norfolk must strive to be outward facing, globally recognised and ready to stimulate innovation and attract international investment and trade.*
 - *UEA is a globally impactful institution with a specific (founding) remit to serve the people of Norfolk and Suffolk. We are and will continue to be an enthusiastic partner in championing the needs of the local business community with the Council and in playing our role as the key provider of higher-level skills, generating useful new knowledge and techniques for local needs and assisting the devolved government in developing strategy in this area. We feel that devolution will bring greater legitimacy to innovative approaches in this area and we would stand ready to assist the new elected leader in this space and alongside other FE and HE providers.*
 - *Norfolk County Council's policies must be nested within and linked coherently to national agendas and targets. For example, policies that impact Norfolk's energy sector must reflect and inform national net zero policy. UEA's world leading research in this field specifically (or others where we have relevant expertise) would support those ambitions.*
 - *In driving economic progress, New Anglia LEP is able to assimilate Norfolk's and Suffolk's needs. Devolution will reinstate the*

geopolitical silos in economic policy. There must be constant, close and integrated working between the two devolved governments in our region to maximise economic growth and avoid duplication and fragmentation of economic policy delivery.

3.5 Adult education

3.5.1 Borough, District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** disagreed with the proposal setting out their reasons for opposition as follows:

Whilst we wholeheartedly welcome the devolution of budgets — we believe that these powers and funding should be devolved to a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA), and not to Norfolk County Council. This is because, we believe that district, city and borough councils should be included and given an active role in the decision-making process, making proper use of their local knowledge and experience.

It is also our belief that the current deal misses opportunities on the topic of adult education and skills. For example, we would argue that a more ambitious deal for Norfolk would seek to secure a skills deal, allowing for greater devolution of powers and funding around skills, whilst also providing a leading role in the design of Local Skills Plans based on the local labour market and economic needs.

- **Broadland District Council** agreed with the proposal making the following comments:

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.

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.

- Whilst **North Norfolk District Council** agrees with the principle of the Adult Education Budget for Norfolk forming part of the County Deal for Norfolk, it does not believe that this budget will be best placed within Norfolk County Council.

The District Council believes that there is a need for a much broader partnership approach required to address the education, training and skills needs of the County than can be achieved through the County Council. A Skills Partnership for Norfolk should include local schools, FE and HE educational establishments, sector based skills development organisations and trade bodies, training and apprenticeship providers, all of the local authorities, local businesses, the DWP and voluntary and community sector organisations. Bringing this diverse and broad group of interests together would be much easier under an elected mayor rather than such responsibility sitting within the County Council where current Adult Education provision focussing on Basic Skills and lifestyle courses is not driving up skills standards across the County.

North Norfolk District Council would also wish for any Skills Partnership Plan for Norfolk to recognise the large geography and rural nature of large parts of the County where many young people and people looking to develop their careers or change career direction are disadvantaged in cost, transport and time terms having to access courses in distant urban centres of the County. This is stifling social mobility and opportunity for many residents of the County and needs to be a key focus of the County Deal secured for Norfolk and the District Council wouldn't be confident that this could be achieved sitting with one body in the form of the County Council.

- **South Norfolk Council** strongly oppose this proposal stating:
-

The devolution of the Adult Education Budget is an important part of the wider skills agenda for Norfolk. There are further opportunities however to explore alongside this – moving us away from a top down and centralised approach to skills. Districts working within the locality, have unrivalled local knowledge and insight and the proven ability to bring businesses, skills providers and people seeking work together and turn that into delivery.

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 and 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 Mayor, leading a collaboration of partners of principal authorities, could take on a more active role as economic champions – a keyway of doing this is empowering through consolidating funding and powers around skills plans development.

So whilst the desirability of local control of skills is accepted, this is not the best way to achieve it, especially as it would discard and disband the work

done by the LEP over a decade at the moment the economy needs it. This is a disruptive proposal that will cause an unacceptable hiatus in skills delivery.

3.5.2 Major Employers

- **Norwich Airport** believe that the proposed Deal will provide the opportunity to develop skills in areas such as technology, innovation and renewable energy.

3.5.3 Other Key Stakeholders

- The **New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership** agreed with the proposal and wrote stating “...*ensuring individuals and businesses have the right skills is critically important for the success of the Norfolk economy.*” This funding, however, needs to be ringfenced to ensure it is solely used for the intended purpose of ensuring individuals and businesses have the right skills, which is critically important for the success of the Norfolk economy, further stating:
 - The skills system is too fragmented and too much controlled at a national level.
 - The devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) should be invested through local providers (colleges and Independent Training Providers). Currently a high proportion of AEB is delivered by national providers via distance learning primarily focused on commercial benefit rather than truly being invested in meeting the needs of the local community.
- **Norfolk Chambers of Commerce** strongly agreed with the proposal, stating the following:

As the ERB responsible for delivering the LSIP, we feel it is fundamental that we work in close collaboration with NCC to understand the needs of both the business community and the education providers. Having local control of the adult education budget means that the funds can be used where they are most needed, we can 'join the dots' and create an holistic plan of action to deliver to maximum effect.

- The **University of East Anglia** (UEA) strongly agreed with the proposal expressing the view that having greater autonomy over skills investment and policy delivery will enable more bespoke, localised decision making about pipeline needs. The University also stated the view that the County Council's work with education providers at all levels (schools, further education and higher education) should become more responsive to Norfolk's economic opportunities.
-
- *Better careers advice and specific skills offers, informed by Norfolk's key sectors, will help school leavers upskill in growth sectors. There is a*

huge gap here nationally which we could address with a locally bespoke solution.

- *This should lead to greater talent retention within the county. Being able to provide clear career horizons to learners of all ages and an integration with wider economic strategy in the county should enable incoming skilled workers to see Norfolk as a permanent destination rather than job specific relocation. Similarly, the local workforce could see retraining and upskilling as part of an integrated local economy with movement between sectors and transferability of expertise between them as supported within the county infrastructure.*
- *Again, the new skills strategy should proactively avoid parochialism, many of the skills challenges faced by the county are deeply engrained and similar to those faced by Suffolk. We would welcome wider regional (Norfolk & Suffolk) collaboration on the skills agenda to make a real difference in supporting economic growth. Consideration should also be given to attracting international interest in Norfolk's unique skills providers: e.g. working with Lotus on globally renowned automotive innovation or working with the wind farm industry to offer the latest renewable engineering expertise.*
- *A county level skills strategy would also be able to address the widening participation and social mobility agendas in a more effective way. UEA would offer to partner with the county to help develop this skills strategy convening relevant providers, employers and learners to help develop a coherent, legitimate and authentic regional response to the skills related elements of the UK wide problem with productivity.*

3.6 Housing and employment

3.6.1 Borough, District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** agreed with the proposal providing the following reasons for and caveats to that support:

We are incredibly positive about the broad concept of opening up housing and employment sites in Norfolk, providing they are appropriate to do so and fit in the context of local priorities and local plans. However, we do also see that there are numerous missed opportunities that could have been secured, which would have fully maximised the devolution deals potential. As an example, we believe that it would have been beneficial to seek greater power over infrastructure through powers that have previously been devolved to other Mayoral areas, these include: the power to create Land Commissions across all principal authorities; and the ability for Development Corporations to issue development bonds.

As before, we believe the most effective vehicle for achieving this is one which ensures strong partnership and engagement such as a Mayoral

Combined Authority (MCA) for Norfolk. We do not believe that ‘working with’ and ‘getting the consent’ of district councils is enough to ensure that delivery of Levelling Up is maximised for Norfolk.

A key factor in development of housing and employment sites will be through the relationships we can leverage across Norfolk with key agencies – such as Homes England. As it stands we do not see that the County Council has the experience, or capacity, to manage these on the required scheme / site level needed to bring significant new opportunities forward. They also do not have some of the key statutory powers, such as Planning, to form the required partnerships. Districts clearly do have all of these things, so, again through an MCA model Norfolk would be able to leverage a network of local expertise and capacity to open-up housing and employment sites.

- **Broadland District Council** agreed with the proposal making the following comments:

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)

- **Great Yarmouth Borough Council** would welcome an early conversation and understanding of the role which Mayoral Development Corporations could play in supporting a place-based agenda.
- **North Norfolk District Council** supports the principle of the County Deal for Norfolk assisting with the opening up of key housing and employment sites...*although the consultation document provides little real detail as to how this might be achieved.*” Providing the following discussion:

North Norfolk District Council believes that through structures such as Mayoral Development Corporations key growth sites could be opened up for development through the early or upfront delivery of utility infrastructure, highways, green and surface water drainage infrastructure and, as appropriate, dependent on scale of developments, education and primary care facilities. These structures would give certainty to developers, utility and community service providers and local communities as to how major developments might come forward and be delivered. Such Development Corporations would have powers of Compulsory Purchase to ensure timely delivery of schemes in both regeneration areas involving brownfield sites and on greenfield sites as allocated through Local Plans, hopefully securing additional external funding into the County through Homes England and registered social landlord partners. It is not clear however, how such organisations might work through a Directly Elected Leader County Deal governance model.

Whilst North Norfolk District Council welcomes the priority which it is suggested will be given to increasing the availability of decent affordable housing for local people, it would wish to understand how this objective will be delivered. This is because in many rural and remote rural parts of the County, including the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, there is a limited supply of brownfield sites available to accommodate new homes. The District Council therefore questions the proposed commitment of £7million in 2024/25 to develop new homes on brownfield sites as this sum will not go far in terms of total housing numbers across Norfolk as a whole particularly in the remediation of brownfield land.

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- **South Norfolk Council** strongly disagreed with the proposal citing the following reasons for their position:

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.

The proposals around the duty to cooperate and the execution of strategic powers are unclear. The questions fail to adequately explain how these will be dealt with and the necessary democratic oversight of the authorities with the statutory powers to deliver them.

There are further opportunities which could be secured through a MCA 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 (like the model previously seen in Milton Keynes)*

In essence, a DEL deal that excludes the authorities with the statutory powers for planning and housing isn't a deal worth having.

3.6.2 Parish Councils

- **Hempnall Parish Council** expressed concern over the possible imposition of Investment Zones and increased housing, offering evidence of the potential negative impact of both to Norfolk:

Hempnall Parish Council is very concerned about proposals to weaken, or perhaps even remove, the role of the planning system, within Investment Zones. A fully functioning planning system should remain in operation in all parts of the County. Furthermore housing targets in existing and emerging local plans (e.g. the GNLP) are already excessive and unnecessary as evidenced, for example, in South Norfolk, Broadland and Norwich where around 30,000 houses in the current plan (The Joint Core Strategy) have not been built out (the current commitment) and are therefore being “rolled over” into the GNLP.

3.6.3 Other Key Stakeholders

- The **New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership** agreed with the proposal and wrote to state the proposal is very welcome, although the amount of funding being devolved are relatively modest compared with the need and potential across Norfolk. This proposal is welcome as a first step, and the LEP encourages Norfolk and Government to rapidly build on this initial agreement.
- **Norfolk Chambers of Commerce** strongly agreed with the proposal, writing:

Norfolk needs to be seen as 'open for business' this means we need to be able to attract talent - who will need appropriate housing and infrastructure and employment sites to provide opportunity etc.

- The **University of East Anglia** (UEA) agreed with the proposal and wrote:

UEA's commitments to biodiversity and net zero objectives mean that we will always prefer the redevelopment of existing sites where possible.

However, we recognise the importance of economic development in the county and, where appropriate, could offer opinion on a case-by-case basis.

3.7 Integrated Transport

3.7.1 Borough, District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** strongly agreed with the proposal for the following reasons:

We agree to the broad concept of integrating all elements of transport for Norfolk, particularly if they are able to be integrated with wider functions in support of the economy. As before, we believe the most effective vehicle for achieving this is one which ensures strong partnership and engagement such as a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) for Norfolk.

- **Broadland District Council** agreed with the proposal making the following comments:

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.

- **South Norfolk Council** disagreed with this proposal, citing the following reasons:

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.

The most ambitious level 3 powers for strategic passenger transport are only available to MCAs. It is inexplicable why Norfolk should settle for a deal that excludes the potential for an 'Oyster' style card.

3.7.2 Major Employers

- **Norwich Airport** wrote of the critical importance of a thriving local economy for their business and the wider tourism industry. They believe that the devolution Deal will be of significant benefit to both their business and the wider business and tourism sectors that rely on the airport to connect with the rest of the UK and the world. The response went on to detail an understanding of the importance of regional connectivity and the role that the airport plays in connecting Norfolk with the rest of the UK and the world. The proposed devolution Deal could provide a much-needed

boost to the region's infrastructure, allowing for improved transport links and greater investment in emerging industries.

3.7.3 Other Key Stakeholders

- The **New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership** agreed with the proposal stating it as very welcome. For too long Norfolk's transport planning has been held back by Government giving funding in different funding pots and over different timescales to different terms and conditions. This makes it difficult for budget planning, reduces efficiencies and makes it harder for the council to invest in the infrastructure required to accelerate low carbon transport. It will be important to gain a commitment from Government that the amount of funding being devolved is not a net reduction.
- **Norfolk Chambers of Commerce** strongly agreed with the proposal writing:

An integrated transport settlement will allow us to consider the needs of our multi modal rural environment. Rural public transport must be improved in order to allow people to access both employment and education. Connectivity is huge across the whole of our region and being given control of our own budget means we get the opportunity to do the right thing for the needs of Norfolk residents and the business community.

- The **University of East Anglia (UEA)** agreed with the proposal and wrote:

Norfolk's rural geography contributes to its minimal and fragmented public transport provision. This lack of integrated transport impacts the skills and jobs markets, and therefore the economy, as many people cannot afford personal transport and therefore cannot commute to jobs.

Norfolk needs an integrated transport policy to enable rural connectivity. Communities will have the lived experience and insights needed to inform such a policy.

More autonomy and spending for a bespoke transport offer will help Norfolk to embrace net zero, i.e. more charging points for electric vehicles.

As a campus University a key challenge is being able to support regional commuters as students – which often includes mature and widening participation students. An integrated transport strategy that could help us address that issue in direct consultation with the council. In our recent community engagement work around CivicUEA, this came through strongly from participants across a number of events.

3.8 Elected Leader and cabinet

3.8.1 District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** strongly disagreed with the proposal based on the belief that the proposed system of governance set out in the Deal, present a number of risks, as well as a missed opportunity. For the following reasons Breckland believe

a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) model not a Directly Elected Leader (DEL) is the most suitable for Norfolk:

- The model is untried, presenting potential risks around governance of a directly elected leader being voted in from an opposing political party to that of the County Council’.
- Under this model will a leader have the ability to be focused on delivery of newly devolved powers and functions whilst simultaneously dealing with the delivery of County Council statutory services.
- This system of governance is sub-optimal as it misses out on the key role that the county’s city, borough, and district councils can play. Breckland believe governance should include city, borough and district councils as constituent as the most connected to local communities, and as experts in delivering positive outcomes for residents.
- The proposed Deal also misses out the opportunity to integrate Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) functions into the DEL role as has been the case in other devolved areas. This would have saved on the cost of an additional election for the PCC role, which would have counteracted the additional cost of running an election for a Directly Elected Leader (DEL).
- There are clear examples of strong success through a Mayoral model in other parts of the country – and internationally. From Andy Street to Andy Burnham. A key feature of these, however, is the Mayors ability to be ambassadors and lifted above the constraints of statutory services.
- There is no obvious benefit to constructing a new governance solution which would only be applicable to relatively few parts of the country. The country by-and-large understands and supports a Mayor, the same cannot be said for a Directly Elected Leader. Breckland are concerned the DEL model would naturally find itself isolated in national conversations, as the model doesn’t neatly fit with the development of policy; and then even isolated within Norfolk as residents could find the differences confusing and frustrating.
- **Broadland District Council** neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposal making the following comments:

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- *We have concerns with the plans for an elected leader and cabinet system of governance which is untried and untested. 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. 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. More detail on how the capability and capacity to deliver as a DEL needs to be developed and shared.

- *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 more collaborative model across the county, building upon the successful partnership 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 participation 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.*
- *There are a range of benefits to a more collaborative model which could be capitalised upon. 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.*
 - *Focus on delivery of newly devolved powers and functions.*

- *It would set the course for future collaboration and better joined up working.*

- **Great Yarmouth Borough Council** wrote with the statement that they wish to be assured...

...that we will continue to be involved in the development of that governance; and the principles of inclusivity and transparency will prevail. Governance that respects and protects the unique role which District Councils play in shaping their places and driving forward an inclusive growth agenda is critical to our continued support.

- **North Norfolk District Council** strongly disagreed with this proposal, citing the following reasons:

Whilst North Norfolk District Council is supportive of the principles of a devolution deal being agreed for Norfolk; the Council is not persuaded that the current governance model being proposed to administer the County Deal in Norfolk will ensure that the voices of the diverse communities of interest which exist across Norfolk – urban, rural, coastal, young and old, people from different backgrounds and cultures, business and environment - will be properly reflected through the governance model of the County Council with a Directly Elected Leader.

North Norfolk District Council (with the exception of the Conservative Opposition Group which reserves its position on the governance model to be adopted) would therefore have a strong preference to see delivery of the Norfolk County Deal taken forward through a Mayoral Combined Authority model with an elected Mayor working with the existing District and County Council structures, as this would better reflect the political geography and communities of interest which exist across our very large county.

North Norfolk District Council notes that despite Mayoral Combined Authority models being successfully implemented and proposed in many parts of England, Norfolk and Suffolk are the only places where a County Council and Directly Elected Leader model is currently being proposed. The District Council is therefore concerned that this will immediately place Norfolk at a disadvantage in terms of having its voice heard in Government relative to what is perceived to be a stronger Mayoral Combined Authority model existing elsewhere. In this respect we don't feel the current proposal is ambitious enough for Norfolk.

North Norfolk District Council (with the exception of the Conservative Opposition Group which reserves its position on the governance model to be adopted) does not therefore support the Directly Elected Leader governance model being proposed by the County Council and is

disappointed that this consultation does not really provide alternative models upon which local residents and stakeholders might comment or express a preference. It is also concerned that in the public's eyes there will be another remote and inaccessible layer of governance and bureaucracy established and that the opportunity to incorporate the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner roles and responsibilities into the County Deal governance structure appears to have been missed.

- **South Norfolk Council** strongly disagree with this proposal, citing the following for their position:

We strongly disagree with plans for an elected leader and cabinet model and believe that this governance model will inhibit delivery within Norfolk and block the Levelling Up of our County. We want a model which does not subordinate Norfolk. Norfolk and Suffolk would be the only areas in the country which would be in this model of governance, at a time where Government is focused on further devolution to Mayoral Combined Authorities...

A DEL in this model would not have a core focus on delivery of Levelling Up and the functions/powers devolved from Government, as they would also have the added of complicated minutia of service delivery. The nature and role of a Mayor for Norfolk should be understood at the outset. It should be about having a collaborative role setting out a long-term strategy and working with government to resource it in the most effective way possible. A mayor cannot be dealing with decisions on social care whilst negotiating large scale investment deals for the County.

The deal has also missed the opportunity and benefits which could be sought in rolling in the PCC functions into the directly elected leader role. The proposed model would mean that an additional election would be taking place (both an election for a PCC and an election for a DEL). By integrating the PCC into a DEL or Mayor role, this would not only allow for greater integration of criminal justice and public service delivery, it would also save the public purse approx. £1m by avoiding an additional election being held.

Every district in Norfolk in 2022 wrote to the County Council expressing their preference and support for an MCA model. To get there and to deliver effectively, Norfolk needs a collaborative governance structure through an MCA which:

- * *is tried and tested, bringing together key levers of growth, housing, planning and local insight and puts Norfolk in the same standing as other parts of the Country.*
- * *allows for the widest participation with all statutory responsibilities and principal authorities as constituent partners around the table.*

- * *allows for focus on Levelling Up and growth in UKplc without the complexity and detraction of statutory services like adult social care.*
- * *is flexible enough to allow for certain decisions to be retained by certain authorities it affects e.g., so one council cannot outvote another.*
- * *provides stability both politically and financially.*
- * *can raise and deploy capital and not back funding revenue cuts.*

It has been confirmed that an MCA model is an option on the table for Norfolk and could be delivered at pace and through existing legislation which enables all partners (e.g., city, borough, districts, and county) to be constituent voting members – allowing for decisions to be made closer to the communities they affect – something which the Levelling Up agenda sees as a priority. The benefits of this model are:

- * *All councils would have an equal voice in deciding what works best across Norfolk to deliver our ambitions for the County.*
- * *Decisions that affect people and communities can be made closer to them.*
- * *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.*

A directly elected mayor of an MCA provides greater local accountability and decision- making power in a similar way to a directly elected leader. The key difference and benefit here is that a mayor of an MCA would work in formal partnership with the combined authority and constituent councils. It also convenes all partners to focus on delivery and outcomes, with the ability to set the direction for the wider state. Compared to the Directly Elected Leader model, a Mayor of a Combined Authority would not have excessive power over both statutory functions of a Council and the devolved powers and funding from government.

It would set the course for future collaboration when it comes to public sector reform.

It could be delivered at pace through establishing a ‘Shadow’ Authority with all partners agreeing and no reliance on the Levelling Up Bill.

3.8.1 Other Key Stakeholders

- The **New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership** agreed with the proposal because a directly elected leader is a requirement from Government to secure the new investment fund, which is the biggest single component of the deal. However, concerns were expressed about the model – for example:

- Can one person run such a large organisation as a county council and manage the deal.
- Will the title – DEL – rather than Mayor mean they are treated in a different and more junior way to mayors.
- What is the role of the other councils in the area if the DEL is only accountable to the county council.

Nonetheless the LEP feel a directly elected leader will enable Norfolk to have a figurehead who can make the case for Government and raise the profile of the county in the way other successful mayors are doing.

- **Norfolk Chambers of Commerce** agreed with the proposal, writing:

The Directly Elected Leader must ensure that they are doing good for the whole county and not just their own ambitions. This role should be altruistic and about the long term wellbeing and development of Norfolk

- The **University of East Anglia** (UEA) strongly agreed with the proposal and wrote:

Strong, accountable leadership usually leads to better decision making. Whilst there is no guarantee that devolution will lead to stronger leadership, the framework for a directly elected leader of the Council, supported by a cabinet of councillors, will strengthen the legitimacy and accountability of local governance.

There is a risk that if a directly elected leader is from a different political party to the Westminster government, there could be political stalemate. However, in devolved regions where this scenario exists, (e.g. Manchester and Liverpool) there is still plenty of opportunity and joint policy objectives.

Recent political decisions that have been determined by short-term populism (e.g. referenda) have demonstrated the risks associated with the transience of (media-led) public opinion.

Whether Norfolk embraces devolution or not, policy must be rooted in evidence. A greater plurality of stakeholders engaging in governance tends to result in more evidence-based policy making. UEA is well placed to contribute to this evidence base, both as an anchor institution and through the deep and varied expertise of our staff.

3.9 Principles of devolution

3.9.1 Borough, District and City Councils

- **Breckland District Council** strongly agree with the proposal as a catalyst for change and delivery to the benefit of local communities. However, there are issues highlighted with the Deal's proposed governance, namely the need to explore further:

- A **collaborative governance model** which brings all principal authorities with all the powers of local government together to drive effective delivery for the County.
- **Funding over a 30-year period which is sufficient** and considers inflationary pressures providing at least £30m per year.
- **Full integration of the LEP into a collaborative governance model like an MCA**, enabling it to become a successful delivery vehicle, driving growth across the County.
- 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.
- **Greater integration and delivery of health and wellbeing** – taking a person centred approach through enabling partners to work collaboratively to have a strategic convening role, bringing together the statutory responsibilities from across the ICS, County and District partners.
- **Agreeing a Skills Deal and design of Local Skills Plans** based on local labour market and economic needs.
- **Power over infrastructure** to drive growth, through for examples MCA created Land Commissions or the issue of development bonds, including greater powers over key issues such as energy and power infrastructure.
- **Broadland District Council** agreed with the proposal making the following comments:

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.

- **Great Yarmouth Borough Council** understand and appreciate that the ‘Deal’ is between Norfolk County Council and central government, however the governance that determines the local decision-making and prioritisation of investment is critical to the success of the Deal.

- **Norwich City Council:** in terms of governance, it's essential that Norfolk pursue a model of double devolution where powers and resources flow to those authorities which are closest to their communities. The last three years in particular have shown that local is best. The city council – and Norfolk's other districts - provides effective local leadership. The districts know their communities and hold the responsibility for place-shaping through housing and regeneration responsibilities, their planning powers and through the £billions in assets held.

The city council and other districts need to be at the table working with the county council to design and implement a governance system which ensures that the money and powers are devolved to the right strategic priorities and accountability sits at the lowest possible level of governance (district level).

- North Norfolk District Council neither agreed nor disagreed with this proposal for the following reasons:

North Norfolk District Council finds this question difficult to answer. North Norfolk District Council recognises the opportunities and supports the principles of devolution, allowing local people in Norfolk to have direct influence in setting the future direction and growth priorities of our County.

North Norfolk District Council is ambitious for its residents, communities and businesses and believes that both our area and Norfolk (as a whole) has huge untapped and unrealised potential and has been held back for many years as more public funds per capita have gone to other parts of England and the UK. The Council believes that successive Governments have failed to properly understand the needs of our County and its rural and coastal communities and of how it is different to many other parts of the East and South East of England. In all these respects the District Council sees the potential benefits for Norfolk of securing a Devolution Deal for the County and would hope that over time further powers and funding will follow.

However...North Norfolk District Council (with the exception of the Conservative Opposition Group which reserves its position on the governance model to be adopted) does not believe that the Directly Elected Leader and amended governance structure for the County Council being proposed will realise the full benefits of devolution to Norfolk. The Council fears this will leave Norfolk in the slow lane in terms of its future negotiations with Government, its departments, utility companies and future inward investment proposals compared to other parts of England with Mayoral Combined Authorities.

In this respect North Norfolk District Council is disappointed with the governance model being proposed for the Norfolk County Deal and

does not feel able to support this element of the proposition at the present time.

- **South Norfolk Council** disagreed with this proposal for the following reasons:
-

Recent announcements from the Treasury have made it clear that they will give preference to MCAs in future. What is being contemplated for Norfolk is not an MCA. So, we are considering something that is second-best at inception. It is not entirely clear why anyone would find this acceptable.

Analysis of the areas eligible for the DEL model give rise to the realistic expectation that the construct proposed will only be available to Norfolk & Suffolk and perhaps one or two other areas. All other areas either already have Executive Mayors within them, have a unitary within the historical ceremonial county or are already members of a combined authority.

This niche proposal is an invitation to be bypassed and exposes Norfolk to the risk that rather than be eligible for subsequent deals, it is structurally incapable of accessing them.

The deal is focused too narrowly on elements of growth and misses the wider opportunities around health, justice and the community, which is increasingly important in Norfolk with a near failing 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.

3.9.2 Other Key Stakeholders

- The **New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership** strongly agree with the principles of devolution – for funding and powers to be devolved from central Government to local areas. The Deal on offer to Norfolk is felt to be broadly comparable with the current round of deals. A directly elected leader is a necessary part of the deal. However, the Deal should only be the starting point, not a signal to Government that Norfolk has had its deal. Therefore it should be the starting point of further discussions with Government in order to ensure Norfolk is not disadvantaged by the Government's Levelling Up agenda and the county's investment priorities and opportunities can be fully recognised by Government.
- **Norfolk Chambers of Commerce** strongly agreed with the proposal, writing:

Norfolk is an amazing place to live and work. We have world leading sectors and a dynamic business community - this is our opportunity to showcase what we can do, given the funding and powers to do the best for Norfolk.

- The **University of East Anglia (UEA)** strongly agreed with the proposal and wrote:
-

UEA is a civic institution founded in, by and for the region, but with a global impact. Our annual contribution to the economy in the East of England was estimated at £560m GVA in 2019. We are committed to being an institution that looks beyond our immediate business needs to the need of the wider community including business and other anchor institutions. As such we have just completed a region-wide democratic engagement process gathering organic views of the University's role, and potential role, in the region. What that has made clear is that while there are general issues facing communities and organisations here that reflect national and international contexts, there are also particular strengths and challenges. This suggests a bespoke approach to local governance would be highly beneficial.

As such UEA strongly supports devolution in Norfolk. We believe that it will have a strong net benefit for people in the county and will contribute to better policy, healthy economic growth within a net zero frame, social flourishing and the championing of culture and creativity in Norfolk. We have some concerns that existing infrastructure across the wider region may be deprioritised and will work closely with any new administration to ensure that where those organisations and networks working in, but also beyond Norfolk continue to receive necessary support.

UEA can play a leading role in helping to deliver devolution. Our educational programmes are already well synced to the counties needs and help to create centres of world leading excellence in areas such as climate science, development, health, area studies, history and creative writing. These disciplines have helped to define the region and play to its strengths and needs. The Faculty of Health underpins the skills base of the county's NHS and provides the next generation of doctors and nurses. Norwich Business School is a regional hub for international excellence in corporate leadership. There are many more examples.

Our research and innovation strategy reflects these regional strengths with cross cutting themes in Climate, Creative and Health, framed by Civic commitments and Global reach around a core of sustainability and ethical practice. As the institution continues to develop and change, we would aim for a close relationship with the council and the region and we believe devolution presents an excellent opportunity to deepen that relationship further.

We also have expertise across many relevant areas of policy and would look to work with the council to find mechanisms to make that expertise available to the leadership in ways that may be more direct than currently configured. These are exciting conversations for us to be having and we would look to develop them further as the consultation, and hopefully the process of devolution continues.

UEA acts as a responsible anchor institution with strong links to other key institutions in the region and beyond. We can partner with the council to take a convening role in some of these spaces to help the newly devolved government hear a good range of voices in its strategy and policy making. We also bring extensive international connection to the region and where appropriate can be an honest broker (as well as ardent champion) for the region in bringing those connections into dialogue with the local authority.

In short, UEA can advise on interdisciplinary policy making and facilitate stakeholder engagement to improve policy at the devolved level.

4 PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS TO THE CONSULTATION

4.1 Introduction

In total eight written responses were received directly to the consultation from members of the public via the County Council's Have Your Say portal.

These responses are reported anonymously and have been thematically analysed below.

4.2 Thematic Analysis

The key issues arising from the responses received from members of the public are set out thematically below.

- **Comments on the consultation process**

Some respondents (3) were concerned that the consultation was not widely publicised, suggesting many citizens were unaware of the opportunity to comment on the potential Deal.

I was dismayed to find this after the consultation for my town had already taken place. I have also discovered that none of my neighbours or friends in Norfolk are aware of this proposed deal or its implications for the county.

I don't believe you are giving your potential voters a real opportunity to have their say. Particularly as this has been kept so quiet.

I feel a survey form should have been made available to residents along with highly advertised details of venues and dates, in order to maximise attendance.

- **Support for the Deal**

There was an expression of support from two correspondents for the Deal received from correspondents.

I fully support what has been achieved by Norfolk County Council.

I think it will be very good for the county.

- **Democratic accountability**

Two respondents provide comments on the issues of democratic accountability at all levels associated with the Deal, covering:

- Concerns around the extent to which the process of selecting a Democratically Elected Leader (DEL) is seen to be fair, particularly in regards to the candidates who stand for election. Specifically the case in which the candidates do not inspire confidence.

In the situation with an elected police commissioner, there are only a few names to be selected from. What happens if none of the names of the potential candidates for leader inspires the confidence of the electorate?

- The issue was also raised over the ability of the electorate to remove the DEL in the case of a loss of confidence in their leadership.

What transparency would there be? Who would have the power to remove the elected leader/'governor' from power? Would people turn to the judiciary for resolution of each and every issue? Our judiciary are already 'stretched.'

- Concern was also raised over the potential loss of democratic accountability in circumstances where responsibility for delivery is transferred to organisations in the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, which is not accountable in the same way the County Council is.

My only comment would be that the voluntary sector, if it received more funding, would need to be more open and transparent about where the money is spent and what difference it made rather than simply going on salaries and admin costs across the VCSE sector. You, the County Council, get funding to deliver services and have a hierarchal structure and you are also properly accountable. We don't need 100+ mini service providers who are not democratically accountable in the same way. However you dress it up nobody's going up keep an eye on the money flowing into the VCSE sector.

- The issue of future accountability of the DEL's actions was also raised with the suggestion that contentious issues should be tested against public opinion.

If major changes are proposed, that affect the public, like congestion charges, there should be a local referendum. The one proposed for Cambridge has caused a lot of animosity!!

- **Funding**

The potential funding settlement offered in the Deal was also commented on, with the view that it was not enough to make any significant difference in Norfolk over the proposed timeframe.

Also the sum being offered 600m over 30 years is approximately £21 per head per year.

- There were also comments focused on ensuring the fair distribution of funding across the county, avoiding the perceived favouritism towards Norwich.

If it goes ahead i hope the money is evenly proportioned not most going to Norwich.

Maybe if successful the county council might realise there are other areas in Norfolk other than Norwich.

- The issue of transparency and accountability for the expenditure was also raised.
-

However, there needs to be total transparency about how and when the money will be spent.

- **Environmental concerns**

Respondents also focused on issues within the environment that they felt it was important for the Deal to address:

- Littering
-

A key issue for me is lack of care for our environment. Litter is lined on every roadside. And almost daily I notice more fly tipping on forest edge's.

- **Housing and Infrastructure**

- Respondents also focused on issues related to the environmental impact of development, particularly the impact of development and protection of natural habitat and the countryside.
-

There is a very real concern (please see Sheffield's and most recently, Plymouth's 'regeneration' plan, where large amounts of trees were felled), that swathes of the unique and wildlife rich countryside, which is unique to Norfolk and is well-known for bringing in visitors and tourism, contributing much to the local economy, could be lost forever with too many housing developments and new roads being built.

- There was also a concern over developments on greenbelt/agricultural land and the pressure on existing infrastructure.
-

There has already been a lot of pressure for farm land to be sold for prospective developments, together with the preposterous idea from central Government that a 'new town,' consisting of 5,000 houses, plus the associated vehicles attributed to these properties, can be accommodated in mid-Norfolk. Our infrastructure and roads cannot sustain this increase in people and traffic on our narrow, windy country hedge-lined lanes, which have markedly seen a large increase in vehicles and associated traffic accidents in the last 2-3 years.

- **Transport**

Respondents highlighted issues of importance to them when considering the issue of integrated transport, specifically:

- Concerns over future road repairs

I see that transport is highlighted; I hope the repair of roads comes under that umbrella?

- Concerns over the concept of 15 minute cities¹⁰, taking the opportunity to offer opposition to that idea, which is not referenced in the Deal.
-

I am also aware that Norfolk has signed up to 15 minute cities. I would like reassurance that there will be no citizens restrictions of movement on the cards!

4.3 Comments out of scope

The focus of the consultation was on the scope of the Deal; however, one respondent used the opportunity to exercise their right to comment on issues beyond this.

In this case they wanted to raise the issue of health care, which is reported below for completeness.

I am also astonished that health care is not mentioned or included in this deal. Watton is desperately short of Doctors and dentists.

¹⁰ The outline concept of the 15 minute city is that all necessary amenities are within a 15-minute walk



Norfolk County Council

The County Deal

Equality Impact Assessment: Phase 1 and 2 - findings and recommendations

1 April 2023

Summary

1. This report summarises the findings of Phase 1 and 2 of the equality impact assessment of the Norfolk County Deal.
2. Phases 1 and 2 relate to evidence gathering, analysis, findings and recommendations.
3. Phase 3 relates to implementation. The requirements of Phase 3 are set out in paragraphs 34 to 37.

Legal context

4. The Equality Act 2010 (available [on the Government's website](#)) states that public authorities have a duty to pay due regard to:
 - Eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
 - Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a [protected characteristic](#) and people who do not share it;
 - Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
5. Since 2022, public authorities must also pay due regard to the new [Armed Forces Covenant Duty](#) when making decisions on topics specified in the Act. The new Duty applies to the County Deal and is addressed in this equality impact assessment.
6. Public authorities must comply with related legislation. This is summarised at Appendix 1.

About the County Deal

7. On 8 December 2022, Norfolk County Council and the Government agreed, in principle, a County Deal', to transfer funding and powers to boost jobs, regeneration, housing and transport to Norfolk.
8. Under a Deal, Norfolk would receive a £20 million investment fund, every year for 30 years. There would also be specific funding for integrated transport, brownfield development (£7 million), adult education, and infrastructure (£5.9 million for housing, regeneration and development during this Spending Review period).
9. If the Deal goes ahead, this would mean that from 2024, the Council could do more to:

- Target funding and resources to Norfolk’s own growth and infrastructure priorities
 - Attract and retain new and key businesses and sectors
 - Invest in the skills we know we need
 - Unlock housing and employment sites
 - Raise our profile nationally, enabling our voice to be heard by Government and help shape future policies.
10. As part of the deal, Norfolk County Council would have a Council Leader who is directly elected by the public, with the first election in May 2024.
 11. Details about the Deal are published on [the Norfolk County Council website](#) and are not replicated here.

Evidence gathering and public consultation

12. A comprehensive range of evidence has been gathered and assessed, to enable the Council to draw sound conclusions about the likely impacts of the Deal on people with protected characteristics.
13. This has involved reviewing data about people and services that might be affected, contextual information and commissioned research about local areas and populations, and crucially, the findings of public consultation.
14. The public consultation was led by the Consultation Institute (tCI) to ensure impartiality. A summary of the findings is provided elsewhere in the submission to Government and is not repeated in this document. The public consultation findings form an essential part of the evidence base and should be read in conjunction with this equality impact assessment.
15. The equality impact assessment is also informed by research over the last 18 months to develop the Council’s equality, diversity and inclusion objectives for 2023 to 2026. This included engagement with over 1000 people from seldom heard communities about the top priorities to improve equality, diversity and inclusion in Norfolk.
16. This included reviewing over 500 data sets of local evidence. You can find out more about this [on our website](#).

Who is affected?

17. The Deal will affect everyone in Norfolk – including people who live, work in and visit the county. This includes people with [protected characteristics](#).

This includes, but is not limited to residents and staff from the following backgrounds:

- Older and younger

- Men and women; people who are non-binary or transgender
- Asian and Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese)
- Black British, Black Caribbean and Black African
- Arab
- White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Roma
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
- Other ethnic groups
- Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Buddhist, other faiths and beliefs
- Disabled people including people with mobility issues (e.g. wheelchair users; cane users; people who do not have mobility in a limb etc); blind and partially sighted people; people who are D/deaf or hearing impaired; people with learning disabilities; neurodiversity (including, for example, dyspraxia, dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, autism)
- People with long-term health conditions which meet the criteria of disability
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual

Impact of the Deal on people with protected characteristics

18. The Deal has the potential to **significantly enhance** access for disabled and older people in Norfolk - and equality of opportunity for people with other protected characteristics. These are core themes within the Council's *vision and strategy*.
19. The reasons for this positive impact are as follows:

Providing a stronger voice for Norfolk – allocating funding to local priorities

20. A core theme in the public consultation was a desire to ensure that the needs of disabled and older people in Norfolk and people with other protected characteristics in relation to growth, infrastructure, employment, housing, transport and education are understood, championed, prioritised and addressed. This was seen as particularly important in the context of the current economic climate and pressures on public spending. If the Deal goes ahead, it will better position and empower Norfolk to address these issues, by targeting funding to identified local priorities and enabling Norfolk's voice to be heard by Government to shape future policies.

Accessibility of the built environment, transport and regeneration

21. The Deal represents a lifetime opportunity for Norfolk to systematically integrate disability access considerations into core growth, infrastructure, transport, development and

regeneration projects – accelerating progress on access for disabled and older people and addressing persistent barriers to participation. Accessibility of the built environment and transport is regularly highlighted by our disabled residents as one of the top priorities to achieve disability equality.

22. Norfolk County Council is a national leader on access for disabled people in the built environment. We are quadruple award-winning for our work to promote accessibility and our Full Council has committed to help deliver **the Government's ambition to make the UK the most accessible tourist destination in the world**. The County Deal will provide the resources and devolved authority to help us to achieve this aim – and we have the track record and expertise to deliver this.
23. This is particularly important – not just to position the UK as the global leader of accessibility – but because Norfolk has a higher-than-average number of disabled and older residents compared to other areas of the UK. The Deal will enable Norfolk to improve the accessibility of county infrastructure, promoting independence and building resilience for future generations.
24. We define 'access' as the ability of a user to independently access a service and all its features in relation to physical access, ICT, organisational culture, policy and procedure. It involves meeting any reasonable access needs an individual might have because of a disability.

Social mobility, entrepreneurship, career progression

25. The Deal will uniquely position Norfolk to address one of the 'grand challenges' which impacts on our residents with protected characteristics – access to high quality adult education.
26. This is because access to adult education is well documented to have a fundamental impact on the life chances of people with protected characteristics – particularly people from ethnic minority groups, disabled people, women, older people and people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or non-binary.
27. A substantial proportion of our ethnic minority population is relatively new to Norfolk, having moved and settled here since 1991. Access to Adult Education is vital to support social mobility, entrepreneurship and career progression. Access to quality learning opportunities is a priority for many of our ethnic minority residents – as it is for many of our residents on lower incomes.
28. Our Adult Education Service is award-winning with a track record of supporting people to learn, grow and achieve. The Deal will enable our residents, particularly those who experience the greatest barriers, to access the education they require in order to build the lives they want to lead and fulfil their potential.
29. Younger people in Norfolk – and people with all other protected characteristics - regularly cite access to career opportunities as an important priority. Funding made available

through the Deal provides an opportunity to increase higher paid jobs and retain talent in Norfolk, to create a place where all our residents can see a positive future, where they want to stay, live and work.

Empowerment and decision-making

- 30. The Deal will provide a substantial opportunity to empower residents with protected characteristics to be in control of their lives and influence decision making in Norfolk.
- 31. Our independent advisor on race equality advises that devolved control on funding and decision making will lay foundations to enable service planning and strategy to respond to Norfolk's communities' need. This will allow also more locally focused solutions to Norfolk's priorities and planning that is led and driven at a county level.

Affordable housing

- 32. People with protected characteristics in Norfolk regularly cite access to affordable housing as a vital priority. Funding made available through the Deal provides an opportunity to support the development of affordable housing in the county.

Connection and reducing social isolation

- 33. The Deal creates new opportunities to better connect people and places across the county – which will have a positive impact for all residents with protected characteristics, who are at greater risk of social exclusion and isolation.

Phase 3 of the equality impact assessment

- 34. If the Deal is implemented, equality impact assessments will be undertaken at the design stage of all core strategic planning and commissioning activities, in line with the Council's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#). This will enable accessibility and equality for people with protected characteristics to be routinely and systematically reviewed.
- 35. In particular, as part of the assessment, guidance will be provided on the maximum access considerations that could be applied to each initiative.
- 36. This will enable elected members to consider what would be the most ambitious and inclusive approach in the circumstances, taking all relevant factors into account such as: local issues; county aspirations for improved access; available resources; demand and future proofing. In the medium term, this would have obvious benefits for service quality and would stretch performance on equality and accessibility as far as reasonably practicable. It would also ensure consistency across all aspects of the Deal.

37. Equality impact assessments enable informed decisions to be made, that take into account every possible opportunity to minimise disadvantage.

Human rights implications

38. Public authorities in the UK are required to act compatibly with the Human Rights Act 1998. This assessment does not identify any human rights issues arising from the Deal. Any specific issues will be addressed in individual equality assessments. Actions

Number	Action	Lead	Date
1.	If the Deal is implemented, equality impact assessments to be undertaken at the design stage of all strategic planning and commissioning activities.	The Head of Paid Services	From decision date
2.	Ensure that arrangements for the next phases of public consultation on the Deal continue to be accessible and inclusive and engage with local communities proportionately.	The Head of Paid Services	From decision date
3.	Ensure that, in the determination of new democratic arrangements, all appropriate measures are taken to encourage people who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any related activity in which participation is disproportionately low.	The Head of Paid Services	From decision date

Evidence used to inform these assessments

- Norfolk County Council's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)
- Norfolk County Council's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives](#)
- Demographic factors set out in [Norfolk's Story 2021 published - Norfolk Insight](#)
- Norfolk County Council [Area Reports](#) on Norfolk's JSNA relating to protected characteristics
- Business intelligence and management data, as quoted in this report
- Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty codes of practice

Further information

For further information about this equality impact assessment please contact equalities@norfolk.gov.uk or visit [our website](#) to contact us in a way that meets your needs.



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 01603 973232 or 18001 0344 800 8020 (Text relay).

Appendix 1: Legal context

In addition to the Equality Act 2010, public authorities must comply with other legislation.

Some related requirements are included below:

Number	Title	Details
1	Autism Act 2009	<p>The Autism Act 2009 aims to improve support for autistic people.</p> <p>The Council's Autism Strategy, co-produced with Norfolk's Autism Partnership Board (which brings together autistic residents and service users, parents and carers) sets out the Council's commitments on autism.</p>
2	Modern Slavery Act 2015	<p>The Council publishes a Modern Slavery Statement on their website. The statement describes the steps we have taken during the year to deal with modern slavery risks in our supply chains and business.</p>
3	The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018	<p>The regulations require us to meet minimum standards of web accessibility.</p> <p>Council is leading work to ensure that all our digital content complies with the regulations.</p> <p>We provide guidance to everyone we work with about how important this legislation is and how to get it right.</p>
4	The Armed Forces Act 2021 – the new Duty	<p>The Armed Forces Covenant Duty is a legal obligation on certain public bodies to pay due regard to the Covenant principles when exercising certain functions.</p>
5	The British Sign Language Act 2022	<p>The Act legally recognises British Sign Language as a language of England. It requires the government to publish reports on how the language is used in its public communications.</p> <p>There are currently no specific requirements for local authorities, but our commitment is to provide services that are inclusive for D/deaf residents.</p>
6	Down Syndrome Act 2022	<p>The Act makes provision about meeting the needs of people with Down syndrome.</p>

Number	Title	Details
		The County Council is awaiting the publication of the statutory guidance to accompany the Act, which will set out our specific new duties.

Scrutiny Committee

Item No: 9

Report Title: Local First Inclusion Programme

Date of Meeting: 18 May 2023

Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Carpenter (Cabinet Member for Children's Services)

Responsible Director: Sara Tough (Executive Director Children's Services)

Executive Summary

The Local First Inclusion Programme is all about improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND ensuring, wherever possible and appropriate, they can attend school close to their home/in their community with the support they need to make progress in their learning alongside other children of the same age.

Local First Inclusion is a six-year programme which has been agreed by the Secretary of State, as part of the DfE 'safety valve' programme, securing DfE investment of £70m alongside NCC investment of c. £35m. This investment is aimed at ensuring we can collectively improve assessment, support, services and provision for children and young people with SEND whilst also achieving a balanced High Needs Block budget over the medium / long term.

Local First Inclusion complements our Norfolk Area SEND Strategy and ensures that we can address the range of issues that have been identified over the past few years through co-production with parents/carers, young people and the professionals that support them within NCC, early years settings, schools, colleges and the health commissioned providers.

This six-year programme is ambitious and complex. To ensure that we can deliver on our aims and objectives and the outputs and outcomes signed off by the Secretary of State, we have designed a programme of 80 projects within 5 over-arching workstreams:

- Workstream 1 – Mainstream School Inclusion, Culture and Practice
- Workstream 2 – Early Help & Inclusion / School & Community Teams
- Workstream 3 – School Led Alternative Provision Models
- Workstream 4 – Commissioning/Using Independent Sector Differently
- Workstream 5 – SEND Sufficiency & Capital Delivery

The DfE are working with over 30 Local Authorities that are experiencing ongoing budget pressures within their High Needs Block budget (the budget from government within the overall 'Dedicated Schools Grant' that is used to pay for Norfolk special schools, specialist resource bases, additional funding for SEND in mainstream schools, alternative provision and commissioned services, e.g Speech and Language Therapy). This programme of work by the DfE with local authorities is known as 'Safety Valve' and has an explicit aim to develop a joint investment package between the DfE and LAs to ensure that transformational change to meet current and future needs of children and young people with SEND can occur alongside addressing historic underinvestment and associated cumulative budget pressures and deficits.

Norfolk was invited into the 'safety valve' programme in May 2022 and the culmination of the negotiation resulted in a published agreement by the DfE, following Secretary of State approval, in March 2023. The combined investment within this programme is over £100m revenue in addition to new capital funding agreed in principle by the DfE in excess of £25m.

In summary, Local First Inclusion has been designed to achieve these aims and objectives:

Norfolk's Plan...Aims and Objectives

Aim:

- Local First Inclusion - system approach
- Improving and expanding the landscape of SEND provision across Norfolk
- Achieving a balanced in-year budget for the High Needs Block by 2027/2028

Objectives:

- Tackling current, and reducing future, demand
- Re-shaping the landscape of provision – shifting left away from high cost/Independent non-maintained
- Redirecting pupil flow from high-cost/low quality independent specialist to state-funded special, resource-base and mainstream
- Intervening earlier, more holistically to prevent escalation of need
- Improving confidence in mainstream provision to meet need
- Increasing accountability and incentivising mainstream inclusion
- Increasing local, maintained specialist provision/ alternative provision within the mainstream
- Driving down costs through improved focus on commissioning and contract management



Scrutiny Committee are recommended to:

- Note and discuss the programme of work detailed within this report, known as Local First Inclusion, including the overall strategy, providing feedback and recommendations where appropriate
- Note and discuss the key risks and mitigations of this programme given the system-wide and transformative nature of it, providing feedback and recommendations where appropriate
- Agree the proposed programme of annual reports to Scrutiny committee and bi-annual reports to the People and Communities Select Committee

1. Background and Purpose

1.1 Ongoing improvements for special educational needs and disability assessment, support and provision are currently the focus of changes at both national and local level. At a national level the DfE have recently published their SEND & Alternative Provision Improvement Plan and Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission are implementing a new inspection framework for Local Area SEND. In Norfolk we are refreshing our Area SEND Strategy and are implementing our new Local First Inclusion programme.

1.2 DfE SEND & Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan

1.2.1 The SEND & Alternative Provision Improvement Plan was published by the DfE in March 2023 and is the government response to the SEND Green Paper national consultation carried out in spring/summer 2022. This government plan is designed to respond to the SEND reforms set out in the 2014 Children and Families Act, to continue to improve services and provision for SEND but to also tackle challenges within the SEND system.

1.2.2 The DfE have identified 4 main issues with the current SEND system across the country

- Outcomes for children and young people with SEND are consistently worse than that their peers – across almost every measure
- Experiences of navigating the SEND system to secure support are poor
- There is too much inconsistency across the country – with decisions made based on where a child lives, not on their needs
- Despite unprecedented investment, the SEND system is not delivering value for money for children, young people and families

and have set out 3 key priorities for improvement

- Fulfil children's potential
 - CYP with SEND enjoy their childhood, achieve good outcomes and are well prepared for adulthood and employment
- Build parents' trust
 - A fairer, easily navigable system that restores parent and carer confidence that their children will get the right support, in the right place, at the right time
- Provide financial sustainability
 - LAs make the best use of the high needs budget to meet CYP's needs and improve outcomes, while placing them on a stable financial footing

1.2.3 Beyond these high-level principles these changes at a national level do provide the opportunity to support changes that we are making through our two local SEND strategic improvement plans - Area SEND Strategy and Local First Inclusion.

1.2.4 DfE have confirmed that there will not be legislative changes within the current Parliament and instead will be seeking to implement their

improvement plan within current regulations and the SEND Code of Practice. Examples of tangible changes are the renewed focus on SEN Support, rather than a reliance on Education, Health and Care Plans, and, alongside this, greater clarity on the respective responsibilities of the Local Authority, Integrated Care Board and individual education and health providers. There will also be a move to 'national standards' to ensure greater consistency of support and provision across the country and, to monitor this the development, of 'data dashboards' to monitor the effectiveness of 'Local Inclusion Partnerships' and their associated 'Local Inclusion Plans'.

1.3 Ofsted/CQC Inspection Framework

- 1.3.1 Within the previous inspection framework Norfolk underwent an Area Ofsted/CQC SEND Inspection in February 2020 which resulted in the need for a Written Statement of Action to address weaknesses within our arrangements for Education, Health and Care Plans, 18-25 Services and Communication and Co-production. In November 2022 Ofsted/CQC carried out their 're-visit' and published their judgement in February 2023 confirming that a Written Statement of Action was no longer required as we had made sufficient progress in addressing the weakness areas.
- 1.3.2 The new inspection framework will continue to monitor elements of our SEND 'system' in a similar way to the previous framework, for example our joint commissioning arrangements and compliance and effectiveness of our Local Offer. However, the focus of the new inspection framework is about the impact on individual children, young people and their families and, in this way, builds on the inspection framework experienced within our social work arrangements through the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS).
- 1.3.3 Due to the recent successful outcome of our Ofsted/CQC Revisit we anticipate that inspection within the new framework could be in approximately two years' time. However, we will have an annual 'engagement' meeting with the DfE to monitor our progress and to assess our self-evaluation framework.

1.4 Area SEND Strategy

- 1.4.1 Norfolk's Area SEND Strategy was launched in 2019 and has been subject to regular refreshes and updates which reflect engagement with parents/carers and young people and with the professionals who support them. The current strategy sets out four priority areas:

Our priorities

- **Priority 1** Working together with children and young people (CYP) with SEND
- **Priority 2** Improving what is in place for families and professionals to support CYP with SEND
- **Priority 3** Communicating the SEND services and support available in Norfolk
- **Priority 4** Preparing young people for adult life

- 1.4.2 The SEND Strategy is co-produced and a multi-agency working group, including the parent carer forum (Family Voice Norfolk), oversee the implementation of the strategy and an iterative assessment of impact. We recently published a 'You Said We Have Done' response to last year's Annual SEND Survey.

1.5 Local First Inclusion

- 1.5.1 DfE are working with over 30 Local Authorities that are experiencing ongoing budget pressures within their High Needs Block budget (the budget from government within the overall 'Dedicated Schools Grant' that is used to pay for Norfolk special schools, specialist resource bases, additional funding for SEND in mainstream schools, alternative provision and commissioned services, e.g. Speech and Language Therapy). This programme of work by the DfE with local authorities is known as 'safety valve' and has an explicit aim to develop a joint investment package between the DfE and Las. This investment is to ensure that transformational change to meet current and future needs of children and young people with SEND can occur alongside addressing historic underinvestment and associated cumulative budget pressures and deficits.
- 1.5.2 Norfolk was invited into the 'safety valve' programme in May 2022 and the culmination of the negotiation resulted in a published agreement by the DfE, following Secretary of State approval, in March 2023. The combined investment within this programme is over £100m revenue in addition to new capital funding agreed in principle by the DfE in excess of £25m.
- 1.5.3 In Norfolk we have designed this programme on the basis of equal emphasis on mainstream inclusion and further development of specialist provision and this new programme is known as Local First Inclusion. We have set out 5 workstreams (containing 80 individual projects) to implement these changes over the next 6 years:
- Mainstream school inclusion, culture and practice
 - School and Community teams
 - Responsibility based model of decision making, funding and commissioning for Alternative Provision
 - Commissioning / Use Independent Sector Schools differently
 - SEND Sufficiency and Capital Delivery
- 1.5.4 These workstreams have been developed to address a range of issues in Norfolk that have been identified through previous co-production work with parents/carers, young people and education and health professionals, within our Area SEND Strategy joint working. These workstreams also provide the basis for us to respond to the evidence base set out in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for SEND. In summary these issues are:

- Ongoing rise nationally and locally of the identification of special educational needs – with the SEN Support cohort at 13.6% in Norfolk (12.6% nationally) and the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) cohort at 4.1% Norfolk (4% nationally)
- Historic over-reliance, in Norfolk, on the independent specialist sector and a need to build more state-funded special schools and specialist resource bases
- A difference, on average, between independent specialist schools and state-funded special schools in terms of quality (as judged by Ofsted) and costs (with, on average, state-funded special schools costing c. 50% less)
- Historic and current over-reliance on referrals for EHCP rather than taking advantage of the range of funding and specialist support available at SEN Support
- Need for greater co-ordination of advice, guidance, support and services for early years settings, schools and colleges from the LA and Health commissioned services
- A lack of confidence from parents/carers that their children's needs can be fully met from within local mainstream schools and the perception that EHCPs are required to guarantee support

1.5.5 Therefore, Local First Inclusion is Norfolk County Council's next stage SEND Improvement Programme covering the period 2023-29. It marks the end of the first phase of our improvement planning, through the completion of the initial SEND & Alternative Provision Programme and our Written Statement of Action, having built the initial special schools and specialist resource bases and having had a positive experience within the Ofsted/CQC inspection revisit in November 2022.

1.5.6 Local First Inclusion is all about improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND ensuring, wherever possible and appropriate, they can attend school close to their home/in their community with the support they need to make progress in their learning alongside other children of the same age.

1.5.7 We are improving support to schools/school leaders and increasing funding to schools to ensure they have the resources and expertise to provide the right support for children and young people with SEND.

1.5.8 We anticipate fewer EHCPs will be issued to children and young people because there will be better support available in the mainstream system.

1.5.9 Our state-funded special schools offer an excellent and high-quality education for children and young people with higher needs SEND and we're investing in more state specialist provision for those children and young people with higher needs.

1.6 Development of the Local First Inclusion plan with the DfE

1.6.1 In Spring 2022, the Council was invited to join the Department for Education's (DfE) 'Safety Valve' process due to the significant and growing level of year-on-year deficit on the High Needs Block budget, thus leading to a growing and significant cumulative deficit for the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant for Norfolk. The intention of the process is to identify a multi-year plan that will return the High Needs Block to a balanced position in-year and to repay the cumulative deficit, with the potential to enter a 'safety valve' agreement with the DfE. The term 'safety valve' is a DfE phrase which describes a series of agreements that they have entered into with a range of local authorities.

1.6.2 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding includes funding for high Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) through the High Needs Block (HNB). The DSG is allocated to local authorities and the annual budget for 2023-24 for Norfolk was set by Cabinet at its 30 January 2023 meeting.

1.6.3 Without any agreement with the DfE, Norfolk was forecast to carry a cumulative deficit of £75.976m at the end of the 2022-23 financial year. On the basis of the accounting treatment introduced in 2020 by the Government:

- the DSG is a ring-fenced specific grant separate from the general funding of Local Authorities;
- any deficit an authority may have on its DSG account is expected to be carried forward and is not required to be covered by the authority's general reserves;
- the deficit should be repaid through future years DSG income.

1.6.4 Following the development of a multi-year plan that will bring the HNB back into balance in-year by 2027-28 and for the cumulative deficit to be repaid by 2028-29, the outcome of negotiations between Norfolk County Council and the DfE is a 'safety valve' agreement for Norfolk¹, with the Secretary of State approving for our plan in March 2023. **In Norfolk, this programme of work is now known as 'Local First Inclusion'.**

1.6.5 In addition to revenue elements the DfE have agreed in principle to capital bids from NCC for two more Free special schools alongside the council's ongoing £120m SEND capital investment. Local First Inclusion will continue the expansion of specialist provision, to reduce our reliance on high-cost,

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dedicated-schools-grant-very-high-deficit-intervention>

lower quality independent sector provision but will also have a renewed focus on mainstream inclusion and a reduction in the reliance on Education Health and Care Plans.

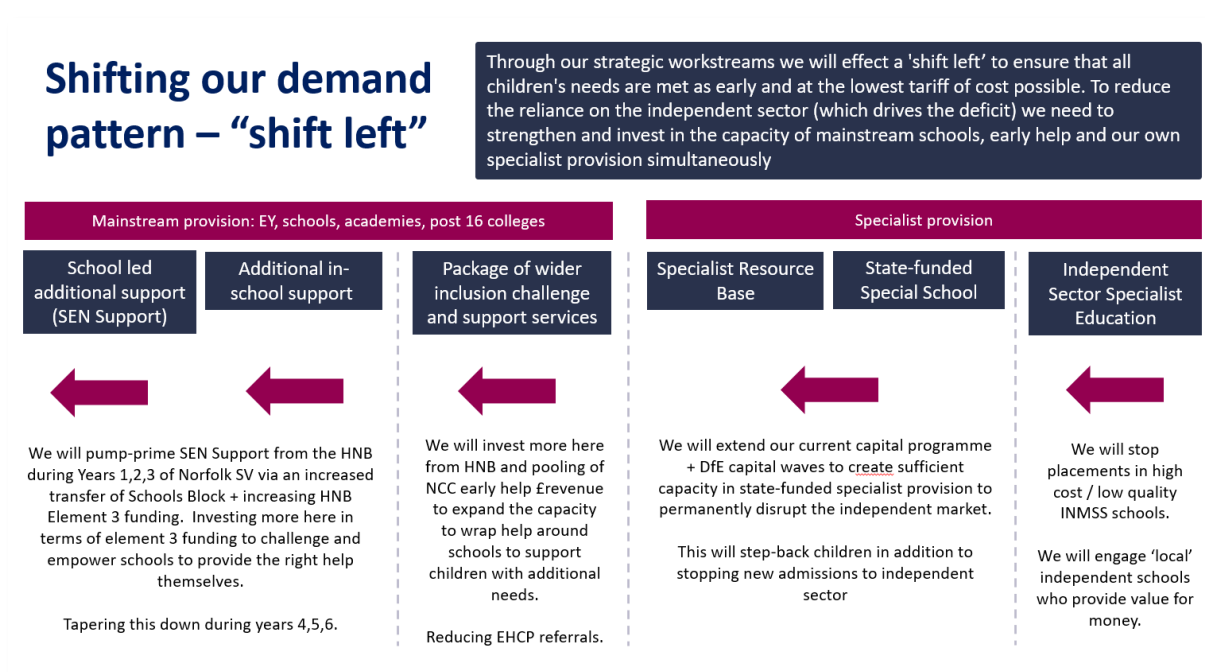
- 1.6.6 The reduction in the cumulative deficit will have a positive impact upon the cash balances held by the Council, supporting maximisation of investment income to underpin other Council activities.
- 1.6.7 Under the plan, the Council will need to continue to consult maintained schools each year on the Fair Funding consultation request block transfers from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. The multi-year plan presumes annual transfers of 1.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. Norfolk Schools' Forum will be required to vote on any request for a block transfer on a regular basis and block transfers above 0.5% will continue to require approval from the Secretary of State.
- 1.6.8 As part of the monitoring required, Officers have established significant, system-wide governance including the involvement of Norfolk's Schools Forum to monitor progress towards the plan, which is vital given the commitment required of the wider system to deliver the plan.

2. Proposal

2.1 Overall Strategy

- 2.1.1 Local First Inclusion is all about improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND ensuring, wherever possible and appropriate, they can attend school close to their home/in their community with the support they need to make progress in their learning alongside other children of the same age.
- 2.1.2 This six-year programme is ambitious and complex and to ensure that we can deliver on our aims and objectives and deliver the outputs and outcomes signed off by the Secretary of State, we have designed a programme of 80 projects within 5 over-arching workstreams:
 - Workstream 1 – Mainstream School Inclusion, Culture and Practice
 - Workstream 2 – Early Help & Inclusion / School & Community Teams
 - Workstream 3 – School Led Alternative Provision Models
 - Workstream 4 – Commissioning/Using Independent Sector Differently
 - Workstream 5 – SEND Sufficiency & Capital Delivery
- 2.1.3 The intention, across the combined effort across these workstreams and through the work of front-line professionals, is to 'shift left' our historic/current over reliance on the independent sector for specialist provision and over reliance on education health and care plans as the means to secure support within mainstream schools. With the revenue and capital investment from

the DfE and NCC we are confident that we can achieve these transformational changes for the joint benefit of children, young people and their families and the sustainable investment of early support and specialist provision within the High Needs Block and NCC budgets.



2.2 Workstreams

- 2.2.1 Due to the nature of the negotiations with the DfE, from May 2022 to January 2023, we had to develop the high-level programme of work in parallel to the negotiations and prior to confirmation of the joint investment plan (pending Secretary of State approval secured and published in March 2023).
- 2.2.2 Following the submission of our plan to the DfE in October 2022 we set about the detailed initiation stage of the 80 project, 5 workstream Local First Inclusion programme. During the spring term 2023 we started the process of communication of this plan to our staff within NCC, school leaders, the parent carer forum (Family Voice Norfolk) and our partners within the Integrated Care Board.
- 2.2.3 Set out below is a summary of the aims of each of the workstreams and a summary of progress to date and plans for next stage project work:



Note: each workstream is led at Assistant Director level within Children's Services and has dedicated project manager support.

2.2.4 Workstream 1: Mainstream school inclusion, culture and practice

- Strengthen the ability of the mainstream sector to work effectively with children with SEND needs, including investment in a range of new schemes, e.g., specialist lead teachers, school to school support, enabling further Special School outreach support, system-wide and targeted Continuous Professional Development, introduce therapies in schools accreditation, strengthen SENCO network, increase SEND advisory team, incentivise inclusion with better funding e.g., through revised mainstream top-up funding bandings to recognise increased level of funding required to support inclusion for those with the most complex needs.
- Continue and develop inclusion helpline, target termly engagement to focus on risk and performance, expand annual conversation with all Trusts, agree Inclusion Charter with every school, increase accountability for children's progress
- Improve systems and processes - review EHCP front door to assessment including promoting that all action has been taken at SEN support level prior to application, improve guidance and expectations for annual reviews, ensure systematic approach to identifying and supporting risk,
- Engage widely and very directly with school leaders, one to one with HTs/ Principals/ CEOs, with key groups e.g., HT Associations, Regional School's Director, Governors, Trust Boards, Teaching Schools, Education Improvement Area and other stakeholders, Tribunal Judges, Primary Care, build on strong relationship with the ICS
- Work closely and strategically with the Norfolk Learning Board and Schools Forum to ensure consistent communication, ambition, expectation and accountability

Progress Update:

- 380 mainstream schools (90%) now signed up to / using Norfolk's INDES & IPSEF models (Individual Needs Descriptors & Inclusion and Provision Self

Evaluation Framework) to help schools consistently evaluate the needs of children and their ability to meet them. Additionally, INDES and IPSEF enable the LA to support and challenge schools regarding their SEN Support offer and to determine the level, if any, of top-up funding to mainstream schools.

- Revised top-up funding for mainstream schools bandings and guidance launched

Next period activity within this workstream is:

- Norfolk Graduated Offer for SEND - Clarity of the current NCC offer will be shared with schools by May half-term
- Norfolk Commitment & Culture Change - school engagement activity is taking place during summer term. A “Norfolk Commitment” shaped by this consultation will be launched with schools in September 2023
- Alignment of Inclusion & SEND pathways - Clarification of pathways will be confirmed and published in advance of the School & Community teams roll out (see workstream 2)
- Development of support for SEND triage - based on feedback from schools, new school referral processes will be piloted in Autumn Term 2023
- Best practice support for SEND planning guidance - guidance, resources and case studies will be launched with schools in September 2023.

2.2.5 Workstream 2: Early Help and Inclusion

- Establish School & Community teams to provide support and proactive early help to CYP, families and professionals – providing support to groups of schools, predominantly in geographical groups in hub and spoke model. These teams represent a substantial new investment in additional specialist capacity to help mainstream settings include and succeed for children with special educational needs. As well as supporting special educational needs, the model is intended to link to wider early help services, e.g., reduction in parental conflict/ support around trauma, substance abuse, domestic violence, family networking, health support
- Build on our existing locality model, also linking with the national Family Hub model) to create a new infrastructure across the County of multi-agency services, school and community zones with SEND focused services to enable early support, challenge and intervention to schools and critically a relationship with families to build confidence in their local provision.
- Working directly with schools using data and information to form a profile of schools at the heart of their community to understand the determinants of need
- The new model will be underpinned by a new preventative approach to the identification of need. We will bring together data from a range of sources to identify children and families with emerging needs and to target early support.

We will meet school leaders in every school on a regular basis to discuss these cohorts and to agree the appropriate steps for relevant children.

- Hold schools to account for working with children, families and multi-agency professionals to meet needs early and effectively

Progress Update:

- School leaders and Children's Services Teams have been briefed on the geography and purpose of the 15 School & Community Zones.
- Recruitment to the 15 School & Community Teams completed in March 2023 with staff induction scheduled for May/June 2023 for first phase teams leading to all teams established within first half autumn term 2023.
- Due to concerns raised by school leaders of the potential impact of current school-based staff leaving posts to take up these new roles we have analysed the profile of successful candidates and, where necessary, phased the set-up of teams to enable schools to back-fill to mitigate risks.

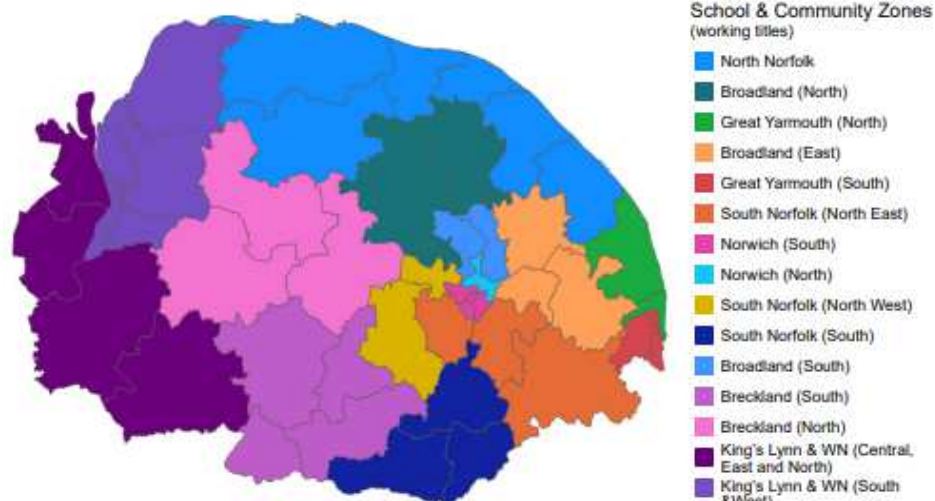
Next period activity within this workstream is:

- Ways of Working/ Community of Practice - feeding into the induction/training process to understand how to develop enhanced joint working between NCC staff and school-based staff, building on positive engagement leading to headteachers expressing interest in involvement of this next stage
- 2nd round of recruitment targeting June interviews for August start date
- Induction of first phase of new staff from June, including newly appointed Team Mangers

School and Community Zones/Teams are a key foundational element of the overall Local First Inclusion programme. These herald a new way of working and we have an ambition, beyond the Local First Inclusion programme, to develop zone working within an associated Learning Strategy. Further, we are actively considering ways in which other services within Children's Services and our key partners in the health system can consider locality working within these zones in a way that will bring multi-agency benefits to our work with education providers and communities.

Below are extracts from a recent communication to early years settings, schools and colleges setting out this ambition for school and community teams and zones:

Zone map



There are

15
School & Community Zones...

...with an average of **26** schools...

...around **40** Early Years settings and childminders...

...and around **11500** children & young people per zone.

Each zone will have a **new team with an initial focus on children with SEND** and other emerging needs – to support inclusion in mainstream and prevent escalation. These teams will be a significant new element of the SEND / early help landscape.

Over time the offer for each zone will **expand to incorporate more services**. These zones will also be a key geography to engage schools and early years settings and support collaboration.

Overview

A key component of both the Local First Inclusion Programme and the new Learning Strategy is thinking about how the schools, early years settings, colleges, services and communities in different geographical areas of Norfolk can come together in the interests of children.

We are going to establish 15 'zones' across Norfolk to facilitate that joined-up approach and to act as our primary organising geography for strategic action.

For the Local First Inclusion programme:

We will deploy new teams into each zone, providing additional capacity to work with local schools and early years settings to support children with SEN and other emerging needs and help them succeed in mainstream education.

Over time, more teams from the Council and its partners will start to operate in or align with the zone footprint so that the system of early help is more coherently organised around groups of schools and settings.

As part of the Learning Strategy:

We hope zones will develop over time to support the creation of a truly collaborative, self improving system. In each zone we hope to see schools, early years settings and colleges coming together to look at their collective impact for children in their community and how they can learn from, challenge and support one another.

Over time, education leaders in a zone can join with wider services to look at collective needs, establish partnerships to drive improvement and to shape the zone offer.

2.2.6 Workstream 3: School Led Alternative Provision model

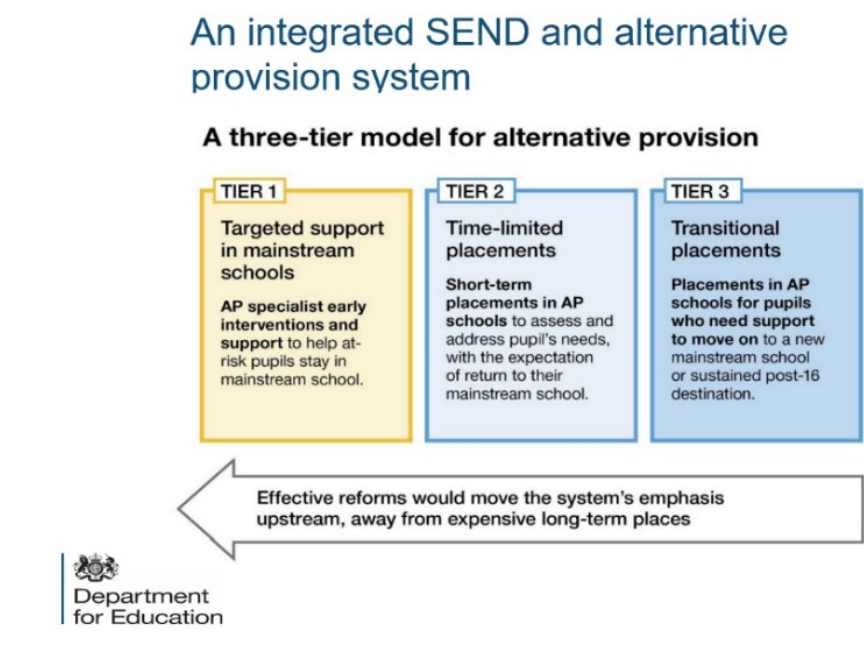
- Prevent exclusions and escalation to variable quality / high-cost alternative provision by developing local school-led provision in schools across Norfolk.
- New provision will be designed to support re-integration to mainstream as appropriate.
- Develop consistent thresholds for in-school inclusion support by developing further LA and peer support models
- Embed the principles and expectations of a 'responsibility-led' model so that schools adopt collective responsibility for all children and young people in their locality
- Reconfigure existing spend on alternative provision to enable school and community clusters to plan and arrange provision for pupils at risk of exclusions through delegating budgets which reflect the needs of local areas.
- Change admissions procedures for accessing alternative provision as a preventative strategy, so that schools can access specialist support earlier and successfully reintegrate into mainstream, preventing, whenever possible, the need for an EHCP or specialist placement

Progress Update:

- The test and learn approach within the Kings Lynn area has focussed support resulting in continuing to reduce suspensions and permanent exclusions. This learning will be utilised to implement change more widely.
- Independent Alternative Provision (AP) consultant secured to provide a position statement on current LA and AP Provider(s) to inform next stage of workstream.

Next period activity within this workstream is:

- Anticipate outputs from DfE SEND & AP improvement plan pilots to ensure coherence between DfE AP 3 Tier Plan and Norfolk's Local Inclusion Programme for AP:



- Plan for an AP stakeholder group with external representation will be confirmed and shared
- Plan for school engagement activity will be confirmed and communicated with schools, as well as engagement activity with parents/carers and children to support workstream

2.2.7 Workstream 4: Commission/use Independent differently

- Introduce a revised commissioning / brokerage approach to deliver efficiency savings for all new placements
- Utilise an external negotiation tool to undertake a desktop review of contracts and to negotiate with providers for new, high-cost placements.
- Adopt the Gloriously Ordinary Lives (GOL) approach to the design of care packages – focussed initially on high-cost, existing packages and embedding of this approach across Norfolk for all new placements. This approach champions creative solution that enables independence where possible. [gmhscp-gloriously-ordinary-lives-doc.pdf](#)
- Engage the independent sector in revised contract management, inc. 'groundwork' for SEND national policy paper in relation to tariffs/bandings
- Carefully and proactively manage the re-shaping of the market and in particular the reduction in the reliance on the independent sector – using additional leverage to more robustly challenge on cost and quality whilst maintaining sufficiency

Progress Update:

- Targeted communications and face to face briefings with all independent schools during the Autumn term 2022 to set out context for Local First Inclusion programme and scale of impact on independent sector.
- Offer of follow up 1:1 meetings with individual schools during Spring Term 2023 to begin process of impact at individual school level. Some schools have already undertaken meetings with us that have resulted in agreement to work together within concept of 'open book' discussions and noting, in particular, a desire of these schools to understand the staffing structures and operating models within state funded special schools to determine their ability to move towards the average funding range.

Next period activity within this workstream is:

- Continue engagement with individual independent schools to determine their response to implications for this sector
- Develop a framework for comparison of state-funded special school funding / staffing models with independent schools
- Continue to communicate with parent-carer forums and individual families to provide reassurance of commitment to vast majority of current placement continuity

2.2.8 Workstream 5: SEND Sufficiency Capital Programme

- Continue to invest £120m capital to expand special schools and specialist resource bases (SRB)
- Further expansion of the programme with a particular growth in SRB place numbers from 420 to 1132 with a focus on SEMH, ASD and with other expansion of SLCN and Cognition & Learning
- Ensuring growth plans into new special schools deliver as soon as possible
- DfE capital bid for 4th and 5th new special schools enabling the remaining NCC capital investment to be primarily focussed upon SRB and school-led AP expansions
- Deliver capital elements of school-led Alternative Provision model
- Remodelling current 'short stay school' enabling the creation of additional SEMH special school capacity

Progress Update:

- The third new special school - from phase 1 of NCCs SEND sufficiency capital programme - opened in January 2023 (170 place Complex Needs School in Easton) alongside the continued growth of cohorts within the first and second new special schools developed in recent years (100 place Social Emotional & Mental Health Difficulties School in Great Yarmouth and 100 ASD school in Fakenham).
- Expressions of Interest process completed for new (Phase 2) Primary Specialist Resource Bases with a very strong response exceeding expectations. Now proceeding to feasibility study and school organisation public consultation process to enable opening dates from spring term 2024 onwards.

Next period activity within this workstream is:

- Continue feasibility studies with individual schools expressing interest in hosting SRBs to determine viability and the capital plan for each scheme – summer term
- Progress 'school organisation' formal consultation at individual school level including Regional Director decision making for academies – summer / autumn term
- Provide final information to DfE regarding bids for two new special schools to enable decision in principle to be confirmed as final agreement – anticipated June
- Prepare for Expressions of Interest stage for Secondary School ASD Specialist Resource Bases

2.3 Working with the whole system

- 2.3.1 The Local First Inclusion programme sets out, over a six-year period, an ambition to achieve greater local mainstream inclusion for children with special educational needs and disabilities whilst expanding state-funded specialist resource bases and special schools; these core elements of the programme have been informed by the co-production carried out with parents/carers, young people and the professionals who support them as part of our Area SEND Strategy.
- 2.3.2 Due to the nature of the negotiations with the DfE, as part of their 'safety valve' process, NCC were not able to co-produce the detail of the Local First Inclusion programme with parents/carers, young people or school leaders. We have acknowledged this previously and, now that the Secretary of State decision is in the public domain, we will be implementing the programme in a way that ensures engagement with parents/carers and professionals in the way we do across all of our SEND improvement work.
- 2.3.3 We have recently carried out high level briefings to Family Voice Norfolk and to the multi-agency professional group who oversee the Area SEND Strategy. We have provided a commitment to work together on the next stages of Local First Inclusion and will do this through existing mechanisms, for example the 'Making Sense of SEND' events held regularly around the county, and assisted through the dedicated participation resource that we are planning to enable us to enhance our co-production with children and families during implementation and delivery.
- 2.3.4 To date face to face and remote briefings of Norfolk CEO's, headteachers and governors have ensured that approximately 50% of schools have benefited from direct briefings on Local First Inclusion (spring term 2023).
- 2.3.5 In addition to LA senior leadership, these briefings have benefited from the involvement of four school 'change leaders' seconded to co-produce and co-develop/implement both the Local First Inclusion programme and the associated Norfolk Learning Strategy
- 2.3.6 Regular briefings of the Schools Forum have taken place, and are scheduled throughout the programme, alongside briefings of Norfolk Learning Board (March 2023), Children and Young People Strategic Alliance (May 2023) and Integrated Care Partnership (June 2023)
- 2.3.7 All Norfolk early years settings, schools and colleges have received a communication from Sara Tough, Executive Director Children's Services, (May 2023) setting out an ambition for a new Learning Strategy for Norfolk alongside the Local First Inclusion programme. Below is an extract that provides the Local First Inclusion high level summary and a link to a video

aimed at all staff within schools to ensure that, in particular, the programme of work within workstreams 1, 2 and 3 develop with engagement of those professionals who will be key in achieving the required transformation:

Local First Inclusion

Local First Inclusion is a six-year (2023-29) Norfolk County Council Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) improvement programme focused on improving educational support for children and young people and their families and providing earlier help. It builds on the county council's £120 million five-year SEND transformation programme which ran from 2018 to 2022.

The video below explains our approach to delivering Local First Inclusion, which you can watch by clicking the image:



Click to watch the explainer video

Workstream 1: Mainstream school inclusion, culture and practice

Workstream 2: School and community teams

Workstream 3: Modelling/funding/commissioning for secondary school Alternative Provision (AP)

Workstream 4: Using independent special schools differently

Workstream 5: SEND sufficiency and capital

Chapters:

- Local First Inclusion Programme
- LFI Overview
- What does Local First Inclusion mean for you?
- Workstream Descriptions
- How to have your say



bit.ly/NCCELFI

Working with the team

If you have any questions about the programme, specific workstreams or projects, if you'd like to join in, or if you just want to provide your thoughts and feedback, you can send us an email at LFI@norfolk.gov.uk to start the conversation.

8

2.4 Financial Plan

2.4.1 The multi-year financial plan is available in appendix A, including the anticipated DfE and NCC contributions, as well as the anticipated Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer.

2.4.2 The LFI plan is a system wide transformation, including development of the

overall workforce, and the governance in place to oversee this work includes system leadership through Norfolk's Schools Forum and Norfolk's Learning Board, representing early years settings, mainstream schools (both maintained and academies), special schools (both maintained and academies) and alternative provision. NCC cannot deliver alone as recognised through these governance arrangements.

2.4.3 Financial monitoring reports will continue to report to Cabinet on the DSG in-year and cumulative positions, as well as delivery of the overall capital programme for the Council.

2.4.4 Given the scale and complexity of the plan, identification and mitigation of the risks are a key part of successfully managing the programme. The key risks and identified mitigations are included in section 9 below.

2.5 2023-24 Budget Implications

2.5.1 The 2023-24 High Needs Block was set as a deficit budget based on this multi-year plan that had been developed as part of the 'safety valve' process. Further details are provided in the 'Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Funding' paper to Cabinet on 30 January 2023.

2.5.2 The Council's revenue budget included £5.5m contribution per annum towards repayment of the DSG cumulative deficit. Whilst this contribution is contrary to the accounting treatment reference, the Council contributing towards the repayment of the cumulative deficit was a requirement of the 'safety valve' agreement², as approved by the Secretary of State. This deficit DSG reserve position is referenced in the County Council's reserve balances presented within the Norfolk County Council Revenue Budget 2022-23 report agreed at the 21 February 2023 Full Council meeting and is based upon the multi-year plan without any additional DfE contribution. The position does not need to be considered when assessing the sufficiency of the Council's general reserves balances and the accounting treatment has been extended until the end of 2025/26.

² The key requirements that need to be met by all LAs in the safety valve programme are:

- How Norfolk will control the DSG deficit and reach an in-year balance (as a minimum), and how quickly. It is requested that this be set out in the DfE DSG management plan template. The DSG management plan should also indicate any planned block transfer requests, which will be handled through the Safety Valve programme where required.
- How Norfolk will contribute to the reduction of the historic deficit through use of DSG surpluses, in addition to reaching an in-year balance.
- How Norfolk will ensure that the plan is deliverable, how it will be managed as it is implemented and how this plan will continue to ensure the appropriate support for children and young people with SEND. This includes ongoing monitoring of progress towards the agreement by the LA.
- A clear explanation of the financial support Norfolk needs from the DfE to eliminate the historic deficit over the period of the agreement. This could include, if necessary, a request for some funding to help implement the proposal, as well as funding to eliminate the deficit directly, although we would not expect this to constitute a significant element of the total financial support requested.

2.5.3 The engagement with the DfE by Officers has been reported regularly as part of the monthly Finance Monitoring report to Cabinet meetings, and a high-level summary of the agreed contribution from the DfE with a link to the agreement published by the DfE was provided in the 3 April 2023 Cabinet report.

2.5.4 Confirmation of the total additional funding from the DfE, and the profile of the DfE additional contributions, was not known by NCC until March, just prior to publication of the 'safety valve' agreement:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
DfE agreed contribution	£28m	£6m	£6m	£6m	£6m	£6m	£12m

2.5.5 Central Government consulted during 2019-20 on a change to the terms and conditions of the DSG, to provide clarity regarding the responsibility of local authorities for any deficit within the DSG.

2.5.6 The outcome of this consultation and the changes introduced, i.e. that the DSG is a separate ring-fenced grant and that local authorities are not expected to contribute local resources towards it.

2.5.7 The accounting treatment for DSG cumulative deficits diverges from normal accounting practice and allows councils to carry a negative balance on these reserves. This treatment is being dictated by Government but will need to be kept under review as it potentially remains a significant issue for Norfolk County Council and will result in a material deficit balance in the council's Statement of Accounts until the DSG recovery plan has been delivered.

2.5.8 The accounting treatment was due to end at the end of the 2022-23 financial year, but an announcement in December 2022 by the Government that the accounting treatment arrangements have been extended until the end of the 2025/26 financial year. Indications from Government are that this accounting treatment will not be extended indefinitely, which would then result in the Council becoming liable for the cumulative deficit and any ongoing annual deficits.

2.5.9 It should be noted that the Council is effectively 'bank-rolling' the deficit and so there is the impact upon local Council resources of the loss of interest. The impact of this agreement secures additional funding from the DfE to reduce the cumulative deficit and, thus, reduces the impact upon the Council's resources as the loss of interest will reduce.

2.5.10 As a result of the agreement with the DfE, the Council has committed to contribute £5.5m pa towards mitigating the deficit as part of its 2023-24 Revenue Budget and MTFS (required for the next 6 years). The DfE requires councils to contribute to repayment of the cumulative deficit as part of a

'safety valve' agreement and the agreement provides the Secretary of State's agreement to NCC contributing to the DSG deficit, as per the regulations detailed above.

2.5.11 This proposal does not, directly, impact upon the SEND and AP capital transformation programme previously agreed in 2018, but phase 2 of the programme has been aligned to the multi-year revenue recovery plan

2.6 SEND and AP Capital Investment

2.6.1 In 2018 the Council agreed to a £120m capital investment programme for SEND and Alternative Provision. This was agreed due to the compelling business case that we needed to develop more state-funded specialist provision – special schools and specialist resource bases – to meet current and future need for children and young people with SEND as well as address the historic over-reliance independent sector provision.

2.6.2 The original business case³ agreed was to

- Deliver up to 4 new special schools to accommodate 400 children in state-funded provision;
- Expansion of current special school estate: 4 additional class-bases
- Build suitable classroom / small group rooms across the county in order to expand specialist resource base places for an additional 170 children (c. 11 bases)
- Explore the possibility of further school-based nurture provision and residential provision to meet social, emotional, mental health and specialist / complex needs

2.6.3 The pandemic had a significant impact upon the delivery timescales of additional specialist provision as well as shifting demand patterns due to the medium- and longer-term impacts of the lockdowns and restrictions resulting in increasing demand above and beyond that anticipated when the programme was first developed. One of the greatest challenges to building a new school (or sometimes extending existing schools) is securing suitable land with appropriate infrastructure in the right location, which has been recognised by the DfE.

2.6.4 Despite these challenges, the first phase of this programme has now been completed, with a new model of Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) specialist resource base (SRB) developed within mainstream schools across the county, ongoing development of ASD SRBs and the completion of the new special schools in Great Yarmouth (100 places for SEMH), Fakenham (100 places for ASD) and Easton (170 places for Complex Needs). In total, this phase has delivered over 650 new places in special schools and specialist

³ Transforming the system for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in Norfolk (Item 8, 29 October 2018 Policy and Resources Committee)

resource bases, including the opening of three new special schools, which far exceeds the original expectations detailed in the business case approved by Policy and Resources Committee. The final places created through this investment will come online over the coming years as new special schools and bases become fully operational as part of their agreed growth plans.

- 2.6.5 The total capital investment for this first phase has exceeded £40m (excluding the DfE Free School investment), consisting of c. £27m of DfE funding and the remainder funded by NCC.
- 2.6.6 The second phase of the capital investment programme has now been refreshed to align with the updated sufficiency requirements identified through the Local First Inclusion plan.
- 2.6.7 This phase anticipates utilisation of the remainder of the Council's capital investment along with available funding from the DfE to create an additional two special schools, relocate and expand an existing special school and create specialist resource base and school-led alternative provision places. In total, the current plans anticipate in excess of 1,200 further places being created through this second phase.
- 2.6.8 It is anticipated that the whole programme will be delivered within DfE high needs capital allocations, the DfE Free School programme investment and the £120m borrowing previously committed by the Council. If there is a small funding gap, then NCC will need to consider under-writing this with further borrowing, but this is anticipated to be primarily mitigated by further High Needs capital allocations from the DfE in future funding announcements. Clearly, the recent inflation rises have led to some significant increases in forecasts for construction projects as a whole for NCC and other organisations alike. This continues to be kept under close review, but the latest refresh of the programme makes reasonable allowance.
- 2.6.9 A summary of the existing capital plan is provided in Appendix B.
- 2.6.10 The full schools' capital programme for both SEND and mainstream is on the forward plan for People and Communities Select Committee in July and will be presented to Cabinet in late Summer. This will contain details of individual projects.
- 2.6.11 Once the total investment is complete, Norfolk will have over 1,100 SRB places and over 2,300 state-funded special school places.

2.7 SEND and AP Capital Investment

- 2.7.1 Due to the importance of this programme to the Council, it is proposed that a

regular programme of reporting to Scrutiny and Select Committees is established to enable effective oversight. It is proposed that Scrutiny receives annual reports whilst the People and Communities Select Committee receives bi-annual reports, with these spread over a 12-month period.

3 Impact of the Proposal

- 3.1 The core intention of the programme is that more children with special education needs are supported to be in local mainstream provision with good outcomes and increasingly without the need for an education, health and care plan.
- 3.2 Alongside this, where specialist provision is required, it will be provided closer to home with less travelling, primarily via specialist resource base, schools led AP provision or state-funded special schools that deliver good outcomes. The quality of specialist provision will also be higher through continuing the expansion of high-quality state-funded specialist settings and a reduced reliance on independent providers, which are of more variable quality
- 3.3 In addition, the Local First Inclusion plan will enable the DSG to be brought back into an in-year balanced position by 2027/28 and for a cumulative deficit to be repaid by 2028/29. In doing so we will ensure the sustainability of the transformed system.
- 3.4 The Council's £120m capital programme committed to investing in SEND and Alternative Provision state-funded provision remains fully active and is aligned to the multi-year revenue plan to bring the HNB back into balance and to repay the cumulative deficit. This includes activity to further expand special school places and specialist resource base provision that is anticipated to deliver over 1200 additional places in phase 2, including the opening of two new special schools funded by the DfE through the Free Special School programme and the relocation of the Fred Nicholson school to a new site enabling the expansion of provision.
- 3.5 Regular reporting to both Scrutiny and Select Committees will enable Council Members to have an understanding of the programme of work, and to enable feedback and recommendations as the work progresses.
- 3.6 Effective management and appropriate mitigation of the risks will be crucial to the success of this programme due to the scale and complexities of system-wide transformation. A dedicated strategic and programme management team has been established, with a track record in delivering previous improvement through the Written Statement of Action and Area SEND Strategy work, to drive the work forward throughout the six-year programme.

4. Evidence and Reasons for Decision

- 4.1 The Local First Inclusion programme is aligned to the DfE SEND & AP Improvement Programme, to the Ofsted/CQC SEND Inspection Framework and has been signed off by the Secretary of State as Norfolk's response to the DfE 'safety valve' programme.
- 4.2 Local First Inclusion complements the priorities within Norfolk Children and Young People's Strategic Alliance FLOURISH Plan and complements Norfolk's Area SEND Strategy, underpinned by the SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment; co-produced with parent/carer groups, education, health and social care professionals and reflecting the views of parents and young people through the Area SEND Survey.
- 4.3 Local First Inclusion provides the opportunity to secure joint DfE and NCC investment aimed at ensuring we can collectively improve assessment, support, services and provision for children and young people with SEND whilst also achieving a balanced High Needs Block budget over the medium / long term.
- 4.4 It is important that outcomes for children and young people are improved and that the plan leads to a long-term sustainable model of local mainstream inclusion and specialist provision for those with complex needs.
- 4.5 The Local First Inclusion plan will enable achievement of an in-year balanced budget and for the cumulative deficit to be addressed. Like many other local authorities, Norfolk currently has a cumulative DSG deficit. Therefore, any overspend on the DSG is required to be repaid through future DSG income, unless the Secretary of State authorises an exception to this, as per the current accounting treatment.
- 4.6 Whilst a deficit remains, Norfolk County Council's General Fund (council tax funding) continues to bear the hidden cost of lost interest whilst the County Council 'bank rolls' the deficit.

5. Alternative Options

- 5.1 'Doing nothing' is not an option given the growing in-year deficits seen for the High Needs Block and, thus, the significant and growing cumulative deficit that Norfolk is carrying.
- 5.2 Throughout the negotiations the DfE reminded the Council that liability for the full cumulative deficit was, within the regulations, an NCC not DfE risk once the current account treatment referred to in section 1.6.3 expired.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Sections 2, 3 and 4 above contain the key financial implications of the Local First Inclusion Plan (specifically sub-sections 2.4 to 2.6, 3.3 to 3.4, 4.3, and 4.5 to 4.6).

7. Resource Implications

- 7.1 **Staff:** The Local First Inclusion plan includes the establishment of School and Community Teams and additional specialist roles within Children's Services to enable the operational implementation of the plan. These additional investments are on an 'invest to save' basis – in that the additional capacity will support the goal of children succeeding in mainstream provision and not requiring more costly specialist placements.
- 7.2 **Property:** It should be noted that as we continue to develop specialist resource bases and special schools, within the state-funded sector, these will be logged on both NCC and Academy asset books.
- 7.3 **IT:** None

8. Other Implications

- 8.1 **Legal Implications:** None

- 8.2 **Human Rights Implications:** None

- 8.3 **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (this must be included):**

There are no direct equality or accessibility implications for this report. However, as part of the Council's 'Safety Valve' submission to the DfE and the related 'disapplication request' for a block transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block, we were required to provide information within an EqIA context. For that purpose, we have stated to the DfE that: 'A central theme to addressing local needs and, in turn the HNB recovery plan, is the development of state funded special school provision. This will ensure that complex needs, ASD and SEMH needs are met directly. In addition, we are expanding specialist resource base provision hosted by mainstream schools. Taken together these additional 500 places will increase choice and reduce travel time for children and young people with SEND.'

- 8.4 **Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA):** Not applicable

- 8.5 **Health and Safety implications (where appropriate):** Not applicable

8.6 Sustainability implications (where appropriate): Not applicable

8.7 Any Other Implications: Not applicable

9. Risk Implications / Assessment

9.1 Overall, the key risks for the Local First Inclusion plan that will need to be carefully monitored and managed are:

Key Risk	Key Mitigations
There is a risk that progress is not achieved in line with the plan, particularly in relation to the agreed finance recovery plan with the DfE	<p>We have established a significant programme team, including senior management and additional specialist capacity for each workstream area, with a full programme and project structure in place to ensure rigorous management.</p> <p>Additionally, we will be carrying out tri-annual reviews as part of the governance arrangements in place with the LFI Executive Board, Norfolk's Learning Board and Norfolk's Schools Forum that will feed into the tri-annual reports to the DfE.</p>
There is a risk that the delivery of additional state-funded provision is delayed or is at a reduced scale	<p>Detailed critical path analysis for all projects in place and additional resources investment has been agreed.</p> <p>Children's Services has a track-record of delivering schools and school-related capital projects on time and on budget.</p> <p>Children's Services schools and SEND capital programme is closely monitored, reviewed and steered by the Capital Priorities Group, which includes representation from all political parties and external stakeholders.</p>
There is a risk that the system does not see the wider cultural change required to support more children to remain supported within mainstream schools	<p>Workstream 1 is engaging a range of school leaders across the County to secure buy-in and sector-leadership for the system-wide transformation required.</p> <p>We have seconded a number of school leaders into the programme to support the engagement with the wider system, and the positive engagement to date of the sector provides reassurance that our plan is aligned to the priorities of school leaders.</p>
There is a risk that costs of provision exceed multi-year forecasts,	Average costs of independent placements (a key cost driver) will be kept under close review throughout the programme and is a Key

particularly given the instability of inflation currently	<p>Performance Indicator agreed with the DfE. This will allow us early sight of any deviation from anticipated trajectory to enable corrective action to be taken.</p> <p>Additionally, the other key demand-led cost driver is top-up funding for mainstream schools. Additional spend is not necessarily a negative in relation to delivering change if it mitigates other, more costly, interventions, but it will need to be closely monitored throughout the programme, particularly given the recent banding changes.</p>
There is a risk that there is an insufficiency of resources to ensure that the right children are in the right provision with the right support	<p>The sufficiency strategy has been thoroughly reviewed as part of the creation of the overall programme, including rigorous data analysis of the needs profile of the cohort and constructive challenge from DfE advisors.</p> <p>The implementation programme will be managed closely to ensure new provision comes on stream at the required pace.</p> <p>The needs profile and sufficiency strategy will be regularly reviewed throughout the programme to allow for mitigating actions to be taken to respond to changes in trends.</p>
There is a risk that the significant changes to national SEND policy impacts in adverse and unexpected ways upon elements of the plan	<p>Workstream 1 will enable the local implementation of revised national policy to be aligned with Local First Inclusion and our overall aims of supporting local inclusion wherever appropriate.</p> <p>Additionally, we will work closely with our DfE adviser with the aim of influencing the DfE implementation of national policy changes to support our focus upon inclusion and independence locally to a child's home.</p>
The underlying trend for EHCP referrals continues to outstrip previous projections and the ability of the system to work in a more preventative way to meet need early.	<p>Workstreams 1 and 2 are being implemented at pace.</p> <p>We are designing a system that will enable all support to be provided without recourse to an EHCP except where a special school place is required.</p> <p>The focus on a change in culture and practice across the education, health and care system to ensure that the right support is provided at the right time and in the right place largely in children's local communities and mainstream schools should develop greater confidence in mainstream schools that they can meet needs</p>

	and in parents that their children's needs can be met without specialist school provision. We have developed an ongoing, substantial communications programme to support a shift away from an increasing proportion of children having an EHCP.
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9.2 Officers will continue to keep the DSG Budget and multi-year plan under close review throughout the financial year, reporting regularly to Cabinet through the monthly Finance Monitoring reports and termly, at least, to Norfolk Schools Forum. This reporting will be in addition to the regular reporting that is required to the DfE as part of the 'safety valve' agreement.

9.3 As detailed earlier in the report, the Government has prescribed an accounting treatment for the DSG deficit. However, it should be noted that this position is not guaranteed and will remain a subject of scrutiny from External Auditors or a change in approach from the Government. If the Council is not able to reduce the DSG cumulative deficit through a combination of the transformation programme, capital investment, high needs allocations and the Safety Valve programme from the DfE, then there remains a risk to the overall financial viability of the whole Council.

10. **Select Committee Comments:** Not applicable

11. **Recommendations**

Scrutiny Committee are recommended to:

- a. Note and discuss the programme of work detailed within this report, known as Local First Inclusion, including the overall strategy, providing feedback and recommendations where appropriate
- b. Note and discuss the risk and mitigations of this plan given the system-wide and transformative nature of it, providing feedback and recommendations where appropriate
- c. Agree the proposed programme of annual reports to Scrutiny committee and bi-annual reports to the People and Communities Select Committee

12. **Background Papers**

12.1 Local First Inclusion Update (Item 9, 10 May 2023 Cabinet)

<https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/2048/Committee/169/Default.aspx>

12.2 Finance Monitoring Report (Item 14, 3 April 2023 Cabinet)

<https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1907/Committee/169/Default.aspx>

12.3 Council budget paper (Item 5, 21 February 2023 County Council)

<https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1949/Committee/2/Default.aspx>

12.4 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Funding (Item 11, 30 January 2023 Cabinet)

<https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1905/Committee/169/Default.aspx>

12.5 Transforming the system for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in Norfolk (Item 8, 29 October 2018 Policy and Resources Committee)

<http://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/Meetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/1421/Committee/21/Default.aspx>

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper, please get in touch with:

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If you need this report in large print, audio, braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

Appendix A – Multi-Year Financial Plan⁴

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
High Needs Block DSG Income	-120.578	-135.212	-141.484	-145.175	-148.682	-152.865	-157.846
1.5% Schools Block transfer	-8.529	-9.015	-9.196	-9.380	-9.567	-9.759	-9.954
Total income	-129.107	-144.228	-150.680	-154.555	-158.249	-162.623	-167.800
Maintained / Academy / Free Special Schools	46.878	53.584	56.351	58.883	62.115	64.828	67.038
Specialist Resource Bases & Deaf Resource Bases	6.314	7.966	10.466	14.291	17.959	19.497	19.887
Independent Special Schools	42.771	47.424	41.437	29.825	16.910	7.427	6.908
Alternative Provision	2.133	2.110	2.007	1.894	1.783	1.662	1.552
Short Stay Schools	8.400	8.831	8.203	7.578	6.957	6.339	5.726
Post-16 (Further Education)	8.173	8.631	8.864	8.620	8.386	8.160	7.960
Other Provisions	5.027	4.238	3.866	3.514	3.133	2.793	2.393
Inclusion fund (including mainstream SEN / EHCP support)	20.176	23.265	25.118	26.533	27.310	27.589	27.370
Speech & Language, Sensory, Youth Offending and Child & Adolescent Mental Health support & contributions	3.551	3.680	3.744	3.841	3.940	4.042	4.146
High Needs Inclusion Infrastructure, cluster teams including parent link workers	2.680	6.098	7.466	7.346	7.323	6.163	5.289
Other, including TPG/TPECG, H&SC levy and new school start-up costs	2.641	2.519	2.591	2.655	2.734	2.804	2.856
Investment contingency including Inclusion Fund	0.000	1.030	1.000	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total Expenditure	148.744	169.376	171.112	165.479	158.549	151.303	151.125
In-year +deficit/-surplus	19.637	25.149	20.433	10.924	0.300	-11.320	-16.675
Cumulative Balance without contribution	73.613	98.762	119.194	130.118	130.418	119.098	102.423
DfE Contribution	-28.000	-6.000	-6.000	-6.000	-6.000	-6.000	-12.000
NCC Contribution		-5.500	-5.500	-5.500	-5.500	-5.500	-4.923
Cumulative Balance	45.613	59.262	68.194	67.618	56.418	33.598	0.000

⁴ Financial plan as at 30 January 2023 when the 2023-24 Dedicated Schools Grant Budget was set by Cabinet

Appendix B – SEND and AP Capital Transformation Plan⁵

A summary of the projects completed to date is provided in the table below:

Project scope	Additional Pupil Places	Spend £m	Notes
SEND Transformation Programme - Phase One			
Primary SRB	110	8.090	Mix of remodelling existing space and new build
Secondary SRB	26	0.702	Mix of remodelling and expansion of existing space
Special School Classroom Replacement - condition	n/a	2.080	Mix of school led condition project, modular classroom replacement and remodelling of existing space
New school	366	24.882	Two new build and enabling works and sprinklers for the Free School
Expansion of existing special schools	150	4.577	Mix of remodelling, modular classrooms and new build
Completed Total	652	40.331	

A summary of the projects both in progress and planned are provided in the table below:

Project scope	Additional Pupil Places	Forecast spend £m	Notes
SEND Transformation Programme - Phase One			
Primary SRB	16	2.100	New build
Expansion of existing special schools	10	0.750	New build, school led
Special school relocation and expansion on new site	200	26.000	Relocation and expansion on new site
Frozen projects	0	0.102	Concerns regarding site development and works halted as no longer required by DfE scheme
SEND Transformation Programme - Phase Two			2023-2027
Primary SRB in progress	24	2.174	Mix of extension and new build

⁵ Financial plan as at March 2023

Secondary SRB in progress	80	5.803	Mix of remodelling existing space and new build
Primary SRB	360	36.000	Expected to be a mix of refurbishments and new build. System requests received and being reviewed, with priority expected for refurbishments
Secondary SRB	180	24.000	Mix of refurbishments and new build. Model to be discussed with secondary system
Expansion and condition of existing SRB settings	TBC	0.500	Remodelling of existing space and ensuring fit for purpose
New school	270	32.400	New build -Free School EOI
Expansion of existing special schools	73	7.249	Mix of remodelling, new build and school-led and DfE-led projects
In Progress and Planned Total	1,213	137.079	

In summary, the total commitments are:

	Additional Pupil Places	Forecast spend £m
Land Acquisition		4.870
Residential Social Care		1.120
Completed Projects	592	40.296
In Progress and Planned projects	1,213	137.079
Overall Programme Risks 5%		3.735
Current Industry Inflation 9%		6.750
Total Commitments	1,805	193.850

The confirmed funding for the programme to date are:

Funding Source	£m
NCC Borrowing	-120.000
DFE SEND Grant allocation	-9.405
DFE High Needs Capital Allocation 2022-2024	-19.320
Total Funding	-148.725