

THURSTON PARISH COUNCIL

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CLERK TO THE COUNCIL - Paper prepared by: Mrs Vicky Waples, Clerk to the Council
For consideration by full Council at its meeting of 1st May 2024

Aim: to consider whether council wishes to provide a corporate response to the Suffolk Devolution bid following the in-principle agreement signed by Suffolk County Council with the Government to transfer some of the control on where and how certain funding will be spent in Suffolk.

The Clerk attended a forum in February 2024 on this matter and repeats below notes of that meeting for council's information.

There will be no changes to the legal entities or statutory duties of parish and town and district and borough councils.

The Government currently controls where and how certain funding is spent in Suffolk.

In December 2022, Suffolk County Council signed an in-principle agreement with the Government to transfer some of that control and funding to Suffolk:

- Level 3 deal
- Additional funding
- More local decision-making
- Greater profile and influence with Government

This is part of the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

Additional Investment Fund worth £16m per year for 30 years, not index linked.

Local control of £9.4m Adult Education Budget each year, not index linked.

£5.8m one off funding to develop brownfield housing sites.

£3m one off funding to expand Suffolk's Greener Homes 0% Loan Scheme to improve energy efficiency and renewable generation.

An integrated multi-year transport settlement.

Control of £9.4m annual Adult Education Budget from 2025 (currently centrally allocated)

Responsibility for commissioning adult education in Suffolk will be transferred:

- Better targeted
- Closer, more focused collaboration with business and other partners
- Focus on the skills we need in Suffolk.

Suffolk County Council's leader would be directly elected by residents.

First election to the "leader role" will be in May 2025 in line with next county council elections.

No new levels of bureaucracy:

- The directly elected leader would be part of Suffolk County Council
- Existing decision-making arrangements would apply.
- Devolution is a journey, not a one-off event.
- Experience shows devolution opens the door to greater powers and funding over time.
- 4th level of devolution already announced offering multi-year funding and more influence.

A public consultation was launched in March 2024 with the aim that residents and businesses will have their say.

A link to the Suffolk Devolution Consultation can be found using this webpage:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/SuffolkDevo>