

# Suffolk Devolution Deal

Subject to the statutory requirements referred to within this document, including the consent of Suffolk County Council and parliamentary approval of the secondary legislation implementing the provisions of this deal.

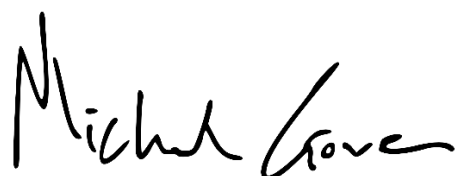


Department for Levelling Up,  
Housing & Communities



**Suffolk**  
County Council

**Signature Page**

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**The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP**

Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

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**Dehenna Davison MP**

Minister for Levelling Up

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew Hicks". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a horizontal line underlining the name.

**Cllr Matthew Hicks**

Leader, Suffolk County Council

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## Introduction

1. The Government has set itself a mission that, by 2030, every part of England that wants a devolution deal will have a devolution deal, with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution, with a simplified, long-term funding settlement. The 2022 Levelling Up White Paper makes clear the case for devolution as the engine room of improved productivity and reduced regional disparities. Devolution will be critical to delivering our 12 headline Levelling Up missions, strengthening local leadership to act more flexibly and innovatively to respond to local need, whether on transport, skills or regeneration.
2. In the White Paper, the Government published a devolution framework for the first time, setting out a clear menu of options for places in England that wish to unlock the benefits of devolution. This framework places a strong emphasis on the importance of high profile, directly elected local leadership, strong local governance, and joint working across sensible and coherent economic geographies. The most comprehensive package is a Level 3 deal, for areas with a single institution over a sensible geography, with the strongest and most accountable leadership, such as a single county or unitary council with a directly elected leader, or a mayoral combined authority (MCA).<sup>1</sup> The Level 2 offer is for devolution to single institutions without a directly elected leader, such as combined authorities, or a single upper tier local authority covering a functional economic area or the whole county geography with the leader and cabinet governance model. The Level 1 offer is for local authorities with looser joint working arrangements, such as a joint committee model.
3. This document sets out the terms of an agreement for a Level 3 devolution deal between the Government and Suffolk County Council subject to ratification by the Council and the statutory requirements for making the secondary legislation implementing the deal. This document describes both the offer of powers and budgets from the Government and the reforms and measures that Suffolk will need to deliver, working in partnership with district and borough councils and other local partners. Central to this is the election of a directly elected leader across the deal area, to champion the area's interests, deliver on local priorities, and be accountable to local people.
4. Suffolk County Council will undertake a public consultation on the deal proposals with other public sector partners, including district and borough councils as well as local communities and business. The statutory requirements include the council consenting to the legislation and Parliament approving it. Once this legislation is approved and made, the devolution deal will be confirmed.

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<sup>1</sup> Subject to the provisions on alternate titles making it through the passage of the Levelling up and Regeneration Bill and the bill receiving royal assent.

5. Suffolk County Council and Government are hereby minded to agree a historic devolution deal which will provide powers and funding to enable Suffolk to level up, raise living standards for its communities, and increase its contribution to the UK economy. The deal shows how levelling up can be done in practice – with clear alignment to the 12 headline levelling up missions and long-term, devolved funding underpinning it.
6. Sitting within East Anglia, Suffolk is a largely rural county, with unique economic potential. Home to around 761,000 citizens and 31,000 businesses, Suffolk boasts a diverse and far-reaching economy, with 81% of people aged between 16-64 classed as economically active. Suffolk is home to Felixstowe, the UK's largest container port, which connects the UK to the rest of the world and is starting to realise its potential as part of Freeport East. Adastral Park is home to a technology cluster of over 150 global ICT companies and BT's global research, development and innovation labs.
7. Suffolk is a leader in the green industrial revolution with its energy offer, including the existing Sizewell nuclear power plant, the world's largest offshore wind market, and Orbis Energy, which is a centre of excellence and incubation centre for energy businesses. The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has granted development consent for a new nuclear power station (Sizewell C), and the county council will work collaboratively to maximise the economic opportunities of Sizewell C for the county, whilst minimising any impact on Suffolk's residents and unique natural environment.
8. In addition, the Government and Suffolk County Council will continue to work in collaboration to maximise the local and national economic opportunities presented by Sizewell C, recognising the 'clustering' benefits to the local area of job creation, supply chain opportunities, apprenticeships, and spreading innovation.
9. There are 14 Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) located across Suffolk, representing 10% of the total for the UK. Suffolk also boasts strong food, drink and agriculture sectors, a strong tourism and cultural offer, and – in Newmarket – the centre of the thriving, multi-million-pound horse-racing and equine industry. Building on these unique sector strengths is economically vital. Ipswich, Suffolk's county town, is a key economic driver with its historic waterfront, the University of Suffolk, key ports and logistics, financial sectors, and cultural offer.
10. While many benefit from Suffolk's unique economic and environmental strengths, the county faces a number of challenges which continue to constrain its economic potential and ability to level up opportunity for all. Over 40% of Suffolk residents live in rural areas where access and connectivity are often poor. Skills shortages, low wages and relatively low levels of productivity hamper the county's growth, while deprivation, often in very local communities, continues to impact Suffolk's social mobility levels and health outcomes. Greater local powers are needed to tackle these persistent challenges and to target opportunities to the local communities most in need of support to fulfil their full potential. Suffolk's deal is underpinned by Suffolk's clean and secure energy; connectivity, trade, innovation

and natural capital offers. This deal will maximise Suffolk's strengths in driving opportunity for all and most importantly, targeting those opportunities to the often very local communities most in need of support to fulfil their potential.

11. Government investment in the county looks to tackle these challenges. In March 2021, Ipswich and Lowestoft were both awarded Town Deal funding, receiving £25 million and £24.9 million respectively, enabling the towns to generate sustainable economic growth and spread opportunity more fairly. New Anglia LEP, which sits across Suffolk and neighbouring Norfolk, has received £223.5 million from the Local Growth Fund and £32.1 million from the Getting Building Fund, which supported a number of vital infrastructure projects across Suffolk. The county is home to Freeport East, a flagship freeport, which is set to create 13,500 new jobs and generate a GVA of £5.5 billion over the next 10 years. Currently, the Government is investing £8.3 million of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in Suffolk, empowering local leaders to direct funding towards their own locally-identified projects.
12. The Suffolk devolution deal will support Suffolk County Council in harnessing the area's unique strengths to drive opportunity for all. The Government recognises that devolution is a journey, not a one-off event. This agreement is the first step in a process of further devolution. As institutions mature, they can gain greater responsibility, and Suffolk County Council will be able to deepen their devolution arrangements over time, and subject to Government agreement. The Government will continue to work with Suffolk to use the county's unique economic, environmental and delivery strengths to drive opportunity for all and support residents in fulfilling their potential.
13. It is the intention of Suffolk, subject to clauses in paragraphs 16-17, to call the new directly elected person who will lead Suffolk County Council, qualifying it for a Level 3 devolution deal, the "elected leader" of the county council. Where necessary, this deal refers to 'Mayor and Mayoral' to confer specific powers or denote specific governance models as they exist in statute. This does not preclude, subject to the clauses in paragraphs 16-17, the directly elected person who will lead Suffolk County Council from using the title 'elected leader' of the county council.
14. As an area with a Level 3 devolution deal, Suffolk will be a key partner of central government to drive regional growth and productivity, joining the existing areas with a Level 3 devolution deal in engagement with the Government from the date of this deal.

## Summary of the devolution deal between the Government and Suffolk County Council

The Government and Suffolk County Council are minded to agree a devolution deal which will provide the area with new powers and funding to increase opportunities and living standards through inclusive growth and productivity improvements.

A devolution agreement is contingent upon Suffolk County Council proceeding through the steps necessary to meet the governance criteria required for a Level 3 devolution deal.

This devolution agreement includes:

- Control of a £16 million per year allocation of investment funding over 30 years, 40% capital and 60% revenue, to be invested by Suffolk County Council to drive growth and take forward its priorities over the long term.
- An integrated transport settlement starting in 2024/25. Government will work with Suffolk to agree an integrated multi-year transport settlement at the next Spending Review, at which point opportunities for expanding the integrated transport settlement offer will also be explored.
- A commitment to explore a local partnership with Great British Railways so that the new directly elected leader can help to shape and improve local rail services.
- New powers to better shape local skills provision to better match the needs of the local economy and local people, including devolution of the core Adult Education Budget, as well as input into the new Local Skills Improvement Plans.
- New powers to drive the regeneration of the area and to build more affordable homes including compulsory purchase powers and the ability to establish Mayoral Development Corporations.<sup>2</sup>
- £5.8 million for the building of new homes on brownfield land in 2024/25, subject to sufficient eligible projects for funding being identified.
- Suffolk County Council will plan and deliver the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) from 2025/26. It will work in collaboration with local partners, particularly district and borough councils to deliver the UKSPF.
- A county council resolution to change executive governance to the model described in statute as the directly '*elected mayor and cabinet model*'; a resolution to make use of the '*elected leader*' alternate title in place of '*mayor*'<sup>3</sup>, and following this, the election of a directly elected leader to provide overall vision and leadership, seek the best value for taxpayer's money, be directly accountable to the county's electorate and to receive new powers on transport, housing and skills.

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<sup>2</sup> As Suffolk wishes to make use of a title other than mayor, it should be noted too that 'Mayoral Development Corporation' is the type of body corporate established by statute but that the word 'mayoral' does not need to be included in the name given to any development corporation the elected leader might wish to establish.

<sup>3</sup> Subject to the provisions in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill on alternate titles receiving royal assent.

- The future integration of New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure there continues to be a strong and independent local business voice which informs local decision making and strategic economic planning. The integration will be evidence-led, collaboratively developed and focussed on delivering the best economic outcomes for Suffolk.

More detail on these commitments is given in the main body of the document below.

Further powers may be agreed over time and included in future legislation. Involvement in and benefit from other Government processes is not precluded by a devolution deal.



## Governance

15. Strong local leadership is essential for delivering better local outcomes and more joined up public services. It provides a focal point for innovation and local collaboration, with local accountability. The Government's devolution framework, as set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, states that a Level 3 devolution deal - the highest-level deal with the greatest powers - requires a directly elected leader.
16. As part of this agreement, therefore, Suffolk County Council will move to adopt what is described in statute as the directly '*elected mayor and cabinet*' executive governance model<sup>4</sup> adapting their constitution - subject to a resolution of full council to be scheduled for 19 October 2023 - giving the people of Suffolk a direct say in who will take forward the new opportunities created by this ambitious devolution deal.
17. Subject to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (with its current provisions on titles) receiving Royal Assent and coming into force and subject to council resolution, Suffolk would call the directly elected person, who would otherwise be known as an elected mayor, the "elected leader" of the county council. The same 'subject to the Bill receiving Royal Assent and resolution by full council' caveat applies throughout the deal document where reference is made to the elected leader.
18. Suffolk County Council will hold their first elected leader election on Thursday 2 May 2024 coinciding with the county-wide Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) election. The second election will be held on Thursday 3 May 2029 coinciding with all-out county council elections, making the first elected leader's term 5 years. The second term, and the term of the leader thereafter shall be 4 years. The electorate will be registered local government electors in the area of Suffolk County Council.
19. The elected leader will appoint a cabinet as determined by the county council's constitution, made up of the elected leader and between 2-9 members of the council, of which one will be appointed deputy leader.
20. The elected leader:
  - Will provide overall leadership of Suffolk County Council;
  - May choose to delegate function(s) to members of the executive. Where this is the case, the member to which a specific directly elected leader-function has been delegated will exercise that function on behalf of the elected leader.
  - More generally, members of the executive may also act to support and advise the elected leader in the exercise of directly elected leader functions.

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<sup>4</sup> One of the acceptable forms of Local Authority governance as set out by the Local Government Act 2000 (Chapter 2).

- The council may establish an independent remuneration panel consistent with existing constitutional processes, to recommend allowances payable to the elected leader.
21. To access Level 3 powers and flexibilities, it is important that devolution deals are based on geographies that local people recognise, as well as being sensible economic areas with a single institution in place across that geographic footprint.
  22. Suffolk has a single institution, namely the county council, that covers the whole geography of Suffolk. This is an established, democratic structure, able to adopt a governance model that includes a directly elected leader accountable to Suffolk's electorate, with a long history of working collaboratively to serve the people of Suffolk. It is, therefore, best placed to be the institution over which the new elected leader will have control and to which powers are devolved from Westminster.
  23. Suffolk County Council shares the Government's view that the involvement of district and borough councils will be pivotal to the successful delivery of the devolution deal.
  24. Suffolk County Council considers the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders group (SPSL) to be an important vehicle through which district and borough councils, together with other public sector leaders, can join in creating a renewed vision for Suffolk in the context of successful delivery of the devolution deal.
  25. Suffolk has a strong history of collaboration. Associated local agreements and partnership arrangements will be used to deliver Suffolk's devolution deal. SPSL is well established in providing collaborative leadership, through its membership of leaders and chief executives of all local authorities, the PCC and Chief Constable, chief officers of the Integrated Care System, and the LEP Chair and Chief Executive. Collaboration is embedded in the 'Suffolk Way' of working. Since establishing a business rates pool in 2013, SPSL has used its share to invest over £19 million in activity to build social and economic capacity in policy areas reflective of the 12 Levelling Up missions, such as, technology, social mobility, skills, worklessness, economic growth programmes, community safety, and housing.
  26. Suffolk's devolution deal will also continue to ensure local arrangements provide for the right activity at the right level, flowing to and from the strategic countywide level, to place level, and on to very local level responsibilities and across the public sector (not just local authorities).
  27. Whilst this deal is between the Government and Suffolk County Council, it is recognised that the delivery of the deal will be a collaborative partnership endeavour between district and borough councils and the county council, alongside other local partners. Suffolk has a reputation for working collaboratively as a system with a well-established SPSL and various joint-working arrangements across the county. These strong and purposeful relationships will underpin the delivery of the elements of the Suffolk devolution deal and further strengthen collaborative working in two-tier council areas.

28. The county council will wish to act collaboratively or in partnership with the districts and borough councils and other local partners when exercising the powers, functions, and funding devolved through this deal. In particular, the exercise of the functions below will be with the consent of the relevant planning authorities in whose area the function is being exercised:
- a. Ability to establish a Mayoral Development Corporation.<sup>5</sup>
  - b. Homes England compulsory purchase powers.
29. Functions contained in this deal document will be devolved to Suffolk County Council by the Government, subject to a number of conditions, including the adoption of what is described in statute as a directly '*elected mayor and cabinet*' governance model. Some of these functions will be exercisable by the elected leader and some by the council.
30. Suffolk County Council is to be given powers in relation to:
- Economic development and regeneration functions.
  - Adult education and skills functions.
  - Housing functions relating to compulsory purchase (subject to the consent of the local planning authority affected by the exercise of the function), plus provision of housing and land, land acquisition and disposal, and development and regeneration of land.
31. The directly elected leader for Suffolk County Council will autonomously exercise their new functions with personal accountability to the electorate, devolved from Government and set out in legislation. These functions are to be:
- Power to designate a Mayoral<sup>6</sup> Development Area and then set up a Mayoral Development Corporation (see consent requirements below).
  - Homes England housing and land acquisition powers (see consent requirements below) to support housing, regeneration, infrastructure and community development and wellbeing.
32. The council's executive - and full council where it is a full council matter - will vote on functions that have been devolved via the council's usual governance method. Any questions that are to be decided by the council's executive are to be decided by a simple majority of the members present and voting, unless otherwise provided for in legislation.
33. Suffolk County Council will be scrutinised and held to account for their devolution deal by the council's Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees as appropriate. The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee will be appointed by council.
34. The Levelling Up White Paper committed the Government to produce a reformed accountability framework for all areas with a devolution deal in England. The

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<sup>5,6</sup> As Suffolk wishes to make use of a title other than mayor, it should be noted that 'Mayoral Development Corporation' is the type of body corporate established by statute but that the word 'mayoral' does not need to be included in the name given to any development corporation the elected leader might wish to establish.

Government, Suffolk County Council and other areas with devolution deals will work together to determine how this can best work in practice, so that we can improve the consistency of data and reporting, streamline our approach to focus on clear and transparent outcomes and ensure the right mechanisms are in place to promote good practice, as well as address serious concerns. This is to ensure that local people have confidence that devolution is leading to improvements in their area. This framework will apply to Suffolk as well as all existing areas that have agreed devolution deals and all future areas.

35. The proposals in this devolution deal are subject to ratification by Suffolk County Council through their normal executive decision-making processes. The implementation of the deal will require consultation on the proposals with other public sector partners, including district and borough councils as well as local communities and business. Implementation is also subject to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) being satisfied that the required statutory requirements have been met, the consent of the council and parliamentary approval of the required secondary legislation. If Suffolk County Council does not resolve to adopt what is described in statute as the '*elected mayor and cabinet*' governance model, this devolution deal agreement does not hold.

### LEP Integration

36. The Levelling Up White Paper announced the Government's intention to support the integration of LEP functions and roles into local democratic institutions to ensure a strong business voice at the heart of local decision making. Further guidance on integration was published on 31 March 2022. The future operating model of New Anglia LEP will be subject to an integration plan developed by Norfolk and Suffolk county councils, working with local partners, and subject to Government endorsement and agreement from New Anglia LEP.
37. Any long-term future funding for the integration of LEP functions and roles will be subject to future funding decisions and business planning. The Government reserves the right to modify the functions and roles set out in section 10 of the guidance on LEP integration.

## Finance and Investment

38. Suffolk County Council will create a fully devolved funding programme covering all budgets for devolved functions (the “Suffolk Investment Fund”), accountable to Suffolk County Council.
39. Suffolk County Council will use the Suffolk Investment Fund to deliver a programme of transformational long-term investment. The Government agrees to allocate £16 million per annum for 30 years, 40% capital and 60% revenue, which will form part of the Suffolk Investment Fund. This will be subject to five-yearly gateway review assessments to confirm that the investment has contributed to economic growth and levelling up. Once the county’s Assurance Framework is confirmed with Government and the Order conferring powers to Suffolk County Council has been made, Suffolk may have access to the Investment Fund prior to the election of a directly elected leader, subject to the agreement with the Government of suitable caps.
40. The costs of Suffolk County Council will be met from the overall resources of the Suffolk County Council. To support Suffolk County Council in the early stages of this deal, the Government will provide £250,000 capacity funding in 2023/24 - once the establishing legislation is made and the Assurance Framework confirmed with the Government - and £500,000 in 2024/25. Any future capacity funding will be subject to Spending Review, in line with arrangements for other devolution deals. Additional activities or capital allocations from the Government will be supported by revenue allocated to Suffolk County Council in line with practice for existing areas with a Level 3 devolution deal.
41. Suffolk County Council will be the lead local authority for the planning and delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund UKSPF from 2025/26 if there is a continuation of the Fund and the delivery geographies remains the same. The Suffolk UKSPF allocation - which is set to rise to £5.24 million in 2024/25 - will be subject to a future Spending Review and reconfirmation of overall UKSPF policy and delivery arrangements from 2025/26. If the delivery model remains the same as the previous Spending Review period, it is anticipated that Suffolk County Council will have overall accountability for the funding and how the Fund operates in the area, with wide flexibility to invest and deliver according to local needs. For Suffolk, it will be essential to work with local partners, particularly district and borough councils, building on established partnership arrangements to do so. This will encompass ‘Suffolk’s Way’ of collaborative delivery that is evidence led and delivered at the appropriate geography (from the sub national; to countywide; to place based; on to the very local). Most importantly, this collaborative approach will ensure that the UKSPF invests to deliver the best possible outcomes for Suffolk communities.

## Labour Market and Skills

### Adult Education

43. Wage levels in Suffolk consistently lag behind the national average and that gap has been widening. Between 2015-2021 earnings in Suffolk increased by 9.6% compared to a national average of 13.1%. Qualification levels also remain relatively low with 54.5% of those aged 16-64 holding a Level 3 qualification or above compared to 61.5% nationally. This presents complex and varied challenges to making the most of strategic opportunities (such as Sizewell C and Freeport East) and improving outcomes for people and places in Suffolk.
44. Suffolk plans to future proof its skills offer and grow demand for provision that will supply the competencies and capabilities for future workforce needs in key sectors, enabling Suffolk to capitalise on opportunities to help drive both national and local strategic objectives including levelling up and clean growth. These key sectors include digital, engineering, and agri-tech.
45. The Government will fully devolve the Adult Education Budget (AEB) to Suffolk County Council from academic year 2025/26, subject to readiness conditions and parliamentary approval of the required secondary legislation conferring the appropriate functions. These arrangements do not cover apprenticeships or traineeships, even though the latter is funded through the AEB.
46. Prior to full devolution of AEB, the Government will work with Suffolk to support their preparations for taking on the relevant functions, including offering implementation funding on a 'matched-funded' basis and awarded through a business case process.
47. Upon devolution of AEB, Suffolk County Council will be responsible for making allocations to providers and the outcomes to be achieved, consistent with statutory entitlements. The Government will not seek to second guess these decisions, but it will set proportionate requirements about outcome information to be collected in order to allow students to make informed choices.
48. The Government will consult with Suffolk on a funding formula for calculating the size of the grant to be paid to Suffolk County Council for the purpose of exercising these devolved functions.
49. In order to proceed with devolution, the Government needs to be assured of the following readiness conditions:
  - a. The Secretary of State for Education and appropriate accounting officer are assured that Suffolk County Council is operationally ready to administer AEB and is satisfied the required statutory tests have been met.
  - b. Parliament has legislated to enable transfer to Suffolk County Council of the current statutory duties on the Secretary of State to secure appropriate

- facilities for further education for adults from this budget and for provision to be free in certain circumstances.
- c. Agreement to a memorandum of understanding between the Department for Education and Suffolk County Council that provides appropriate assurance that the named parties will work together to ensure the future financial stability of the provider base, including for sharing financial risk and managing provider failure.
  - d. Learner protection arrangements are agreed between parties.

## Skills and Employment

50. Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) will set out the current and future skills needs of the area and how local provision needs to change to help people develop the skills they need to get good jobs and increase their prospects. They will build a stronger and more dynamic partnership between employers and providers and allow provision to be more responsive to the skills needs of employers in local labour markets.
51. Working with the designated Employer Representative Body, utilising and sharing the local labour market intelligence and analysis developed<sup>7</sup>, Suffolk County Council will support and provide input into the LSIP for the area.
52. Suffolk County Council will be considered alongside other areas with a Level 3 devolution deal at future Spending Reviews with regard to the devolution of skills funding.
53. The Government recognises the challenges facing Suffolk, with coastal and rural communities experiencing a complex range of issues, such as poor connectivity. There is a need to develop and deliver targeted programmes to address the unique and very different challenges across such a large and diverse county. Suffolk will work in partnership to develop proactive support for priority groups through ongoing engagement with local Department for Work and Pensions Jobcentre Plus.
54. The Government and the county will also work together to better target employment support by understanding and utilising publicly available local labour market intelligence and analysis<sup>8</sup>. As part of the development of the economic framework, the Government is committed to working together on the county's strategic priorities and supporting the development of the county's economic framework.

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<sup>7</sup> This includes analysis produced previously by the New Anglia LEP and its Skills Advisory Panel (funded by a Department for Education grant up until March 2023).

<sup>8</sup> This includes analysis produced previously by the New Anglia LEP and its Skills Advisory Panel (funded by a Department for Education grant up until March 2023).

55. The Department for Work and Pensions and Suffolk County Council will work together on its strategic priorities for employment through enhanced engagement by way of:
- a. Membership of the joint Department for Work and Pensions and Department for Education Mayoral Combined Authority Advisory Group.
  - b. Regular engagement with the regional Employer and Partnership team in Jobcentre Plus, and strategic labour market partnership teams.
56. The Department for Work and Pensions will also consider what role Suffolk could have in the design and delivery of future contracted employment programmes.



## Housing and Land

57. Suffolk County Council will have broad powers to acquire and dispose of land to build houses, commercial space and infrastructure, for growth and regeneration. They will be able to invest to deliver housing for the area. To effectively deliver the best outcomes, Suffolk will work in collaboration with district and borough councils.
58. Suffolk County Council will have land assembly and compulsory purchase powers, subject to the consent of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
59. The directly elected leader will have the power to designate a Mayoral Development Area and to create Mayoral Development Corporations, which will support delivery on strategic sites in Suffolk.<sup>9</sup> This power may be exercised only with the consent of the planning authority in the area in which the Development Corporation is to be established.
60. Suffolk County Council will be awarded £5.8 million of devolved capital funding in 2024/25 to support the building of new homes on brownfield land, subject to sufficient eligible projects for funding being identified. To effectively deliver the best outcomes, Suffolk will work in collaboration with district and borough councils.
61. To support Suffolk to identify and bring forward a pipeline of housing projects, the Government will also provide £317,000 in capacity funding across 2023/24 and 2024/25.
62. Government will also work with Suffolk County Council to build on the success of the One Public Estate model to better understand and utilise public land in the area. This will include considering how best to engage with Suffolk when planning for changes to public estates in the county.

### Working with Homes England

63. Suffolk County Council and Homes England are committed, with the support of DLUHC, to working collaboratively – combining their skills and capacity – to unlock the barriers to affordable housing delivery, regeneration and wider housing growth through the development of a pipeline for the region. This will be underpinned by a clear Action Plan setting out workstreams, timescales and milestones, as well as respective roles and responsibilities.
64. Homes England and DLUHC will explore the potential for investing in the delivery of this pipeline through current and future funding streams, including the Affordable Housing Programme. As stated in paragraph 23 collaborative work with local

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<sup>9</sup> As Suffolk wishes to make use of a title other than mayor, it should be noted that ‘Mayoral Development Corporation’ is the type of body corporate established by statute but that the word ‘mayoral’ does not need to be included in the name given to any development corporation the elected leader might wish to establish.

partners, particularly district and borough councils across Suffolk, will be pivotal to delivery.

65. Homes England, DLUHC, and Suffolk will also collectively explore how wider measures – including viability assessments and the planning system – could better support Suffolk’s plans to increase much needed rural affordable housing supply, and in partnership test how the developing Homes England rural strategy could assist in this.

## Transport

66. Suffolk County Council is already responsible for transport planning and delivery and will continue to exercise these functions and powers.

### Transport plans

67. In line with best practice as set out in new local transport plan guidance planned for early 2023, Suffolk will develop a provisional area-wide local transport plan by March 2024 to be finalised by the elected leader once elected. Suffolk will be provided with an additional £250,000 of revenue funding in 2023/24 and 2024/25 to accelerate this work and implement quantifiable carbon reductions to the higher standard recommended in related guidance. The investment in local transport planning and the consolidated transport budget will provide Suffolk with the opportunity to design a pipeline of transport schemes.

### Consolidated transport budget

68. The elected leader will be responsible for a devolved and consolidated integrated local transport budget for the area of Suffolk, consisting initially of the local highways maintenance funding (pothole and highways maintenance block funding) and integrated transport block. The integrated transport settlement will be available to Suffolk following the first directly elected leader election in May 2024, for the final year (2024/25) of the current Spending Review period. The Government acknowledges that Suffolk desire longer-term certainty that the integrated transport settlement will continue beyond 2025 and will therefore work with Suffolk to agree an integrated multi-year transport settlement at the next Spending Review. At this point opportunities for expanding the integrated transport settlement offer will also be explored.

### Roads

69. The Government acknowledges the challenges Suffolk faces with transport connectivity as a large rural area. The Government also recognises the aspirations of Suffolk to improve public electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the county, which would increase the uptake of electric vehicles in the county and reduce carbon emissions by supporting all motorists in making the switch. Government is introducing a new £450 million local electric vehicle infrastructure (LEVI) scheme for local authorities to support local EV infrastructure delivery and will work with Suffolk to ensure the area is well placed to respond once funding arrangements are announced.

70. Government is committed to improving the Strategic Road Network serving Suffolk. In Road Period 1, ending in 2020, Government completed the £1.5 billion 12 mile A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon upgrade, improving long distance connectivity between the East of England and the Midlands and North. In the current Road

Period (2020 – 2025), Government will begin widening the A12 between Junction 19 (Chelmsford) and Junction 25 (A120 interchange), subject to completion of the usual statutory processes, to ease congestion on this key East-West corridor and cope with increasing traffic demands. This £1-1.3 billion scheme is scheduled to begin construction in 2023/24 and complete in the next Road Period (2025-2030). Government is also considering improvements to the A12/A14 Copdock Interchange as one of 33 schemes in the RIS3 Pipeline. National Highways undertook an options consultation on the scheme in 2021. Final decisions on this and other Pipeline schemes will be taken as part of the RIS3 setting process. The Lake Lothing Third Crossing “Gull Wing” is also currently under construction, with funding from the Department for Transport of £75 million, and which is due to be completed by the end of 2023.

71. Government recognises the importance of the A12 to Suffolk, the significance of the proposed improvements in supporting housing and economic growth to local stakeholders, and that opportunities provided by the growth of the energy sector should be realised for the people and businesses of Suffolk. Government also acknowledges that the construction of a new nuclear power plant at Sizewell will have implications for the existing highway infrastructure. Government is considering the proposals for the A12 improvement scheme from A14 Seven Hills to A1152 Woods Lane as part of decisions on the Major Road Network (MRN) programme, taking into account its economic benefits balanced against wider factors.

## Buses

72. Suffolk County Council has implemented an initial Enhanced Partnership to deliver high quality bus services as part of an integrated local transport system. If Suffolk concludes that bus franchising is likely to deliver better outcomes, the Government will consider conferring franchising powers from the Transport Act 2000 where Suffolk demonstrates they have the capability and intention to deliver their chosen franchise model and that franchising will deliver better services than their enhanced partnership without needlessly delaying benefits to passengers. In any partnership or franchising arrangements, Suffolk should seek within available resources to facilitate the delivery of smart, simple integrated ticketing across all local modes of transport. Suffolk will continue to work with relevant partners – Transport East, bus and rail operators, Great British Railways and the Department for Transport – to realise this ambition.
73. As per the commitment in the National Bus Strategy the Government is working on the reform of the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG). Following the reform of BSOG, should Suffolk request BSOG be devolved to them the Department of Transport will work with Suffolk to devolve BSOG to them in line with the consultation outcome.

## Rail

74. Government will support Suffolk in seeking a new rail partnership with Great British Railways, once established, so that their priorities can be taken into consideration in future decisions regarding their local network. Suffolk, similarly to other areas with a Level 3 devolution deal, will be considered a priority for these agreements which will provide the ability to influence the local rail offer. Local priorities will need to be coordinated and compatible with surrounding areas and the needs of the national network.

#### Active Travel

75. Suffolk will work with Active Travel England (ATE) on any future walking and cycling schemes to ensure schemes are delivered to high standards, including compliance with Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20). All cycling and walking schemes must be approved by ATE as complying with LTN 1/20.

## Net Zero and Climate Change

76. As part of its Net Zero Strategy, the Government recognises that devolved and local government can play an essential role in meeting national net zero ambitions. Local leaders in Suffolk and elsewhere are well placed to engage with all parts of their communities and to understand local policy, political, social, and economic nuances relevant to climate action. This is why the devolution framework grants places the opportunity to adopt innovative local proposals to deliver action on climate change and the UK's net zero targets. Suffolk and local partners are already working together to achieve ambitious net zero targets. As well as net zero commitments made by Suffolk councils, public sector partners are working with local businesses and communities to deliver the ambitious Suffolk Climate Emergency Plan.
77. The Local Net Zero Forum, chaired by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, is cross-Government and brings together national and local government senior officials. Through representative organisations on the forum – the Local Government Association (LGA), Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), Core Cities and the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) – Suffolk will get the opportunity to discuss local net zero policy and delivery issues in the round.

### Networks

78. Government recognises the need to increase Suffolk's electricity network capacity to meet future electricity demand. We are committed to ensuring that local areas, such as those with a devolution deal, including Suffolk County Council have a meaningful role in planning our future energy system for net zero.

### Buildings

79. Government commits to explore the potential benefits of and design options for a place-based approach to delivering retrofit measures, as part of the Government's commitment in the Net Zero Strategy to explore how we could simplify and consolidate funds which target net zero initiatives at the local level where this provides the best approach to tackling climate change. This work will involve inviting Suffolk to work with Government through the relevant representative organisations to consider if such an approach could accelerate the meeting of net zero goals and provide better value for money.
80. The Government will make a one-off investment of £3 million in 2022/23 to expand Suffolk County Council's Greener Homes 0% Loan Scheme to improve energy efficiency and renewable generation in households across Suffolk.

### Clean heat

81. Government has confirmed its intention to establish heat network zoning in England. Under the zoning proposals, Zoning Coordinators within local government will be able to designate areas as heat network zones where heat

networks are going to be the most cost-effective way to decarbonise heating and hot water within the zone. This will enable Suffolk County Council to assume the role of heat network Zoning Coordinator for its locality, and play a key role in the delivery of heat decarbonisation infrastructure. This includes requiring certain buildings to connect to heat networks within the zones. Government is committed to have heat network zoning in place by 2025.

### Net zero infrastructure

82. The UK Infrastructure Bank (“the Bank”) will increase infrastructure investment across the UK by partnering with the private sector and local government to help tackle climate change and support regional and local economic growth. The Bank’s advisory service, when launched, could offer advice and support to local actors, including Suffolk County Council, to help deliver on their objectives, including driving investment into net zero infrastructure and innovative local projects. It can also act as a convenor, bringing together local actors for collaborative projects, and where appropriate identifying where projects can be aggregated to achieve greater impacts.

### Green jobs

83. Through the Green Jobs Delivery Group, the Government is working to ensure that workers, businesses and local areas, including Suffolk, are supported through the net zero transition. Suffolk County Council now has the opportunity to deliver green skills interventions at a local level through having a greater role in delivering the Adult Education Budget and UKSPF.

### Flooding and Water Resource

84. Government recognises that an integrated approach to flood risk and water resources management can benefit the needs of communities, businesses and the environment across Suffolk. Government would therefore encourage Suffolk County Council’s ambition for closer working between Flood Risk Management Authorities, Water Resources East, agricultural water users and managers of the natural environment to build a strong collaborative approach to holistic water management that reduces flood risk, protects our environment and secures a sustainable water supply for all. This will not change the role and responsibilities of existing Risk Management Authorities.

### Nature Recovery

85. Suffolk County Council has provisionally agreed to act as the responsible authority for the preparation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for the area. Formal appointment of responsible authorities will be made following publication of relevant regulations and guidance and confirmation of funding. The Strategy will: map the most valuable existing habitat for nature; map proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals, and; agree priorities for nature’s recovery. Defra agree to consider the role of Suffolk County Council in the LNRS in due course.

86. Government will ensure the new environmental land management schemes are implemented in line with local needs and priorities, including those of Suffolk.
87. Government will work with Suffolk to ensure that local environmental policies, including Suffolk's LNRS and existing and potential protected landscapes, support the delivery of Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. Government recognises the ambition of Suffolk to pilot innovative climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives and will consider Suffolk as a test-bed geography for future policies.



## Culture and Tourism

88. The Department for Digital, Culture Media, and Sport (DCMS) will work with its Arm's Length Bodies to explore the potential for partnership working with Suffolk and its local partners. This partnership could develop and deliver strategies to realise Suffolk's creative, cultural and heritage potential in ways that complement its broader ambitions around place-making, enhancing wellbeing, the sustainability of its historic environment, attracting and retaining young people, and supporting the growth of the visitor economy, creative industries and skills.
89. Tourism and the visitor economy are crucial industries for Suffolk, with the county attracting large numbers of leisure and business visitors every year. DCMS will work with the accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnership for the region to help develop Suffolk's visitor economy, with a view to harnessing Suffolk's potential to grow domestic and international visitor spend, and encourage visits throughout the year rather than just during the traditional tourist season. This collaborative work, across those areas set out in the Government's Tourism Recovery Plan, could include the potential to expand major events and festivals and drive up the economic and place-making potential of these; expansion of business tourism by capitalising on our gateway links with Northern Europe; and harnessing Suffolk's leading voice in delivering green tourism and its ambition to become England's first fully net zero visitor destination.

## Digital

90. The Government recognises that high quality digital connectivity is crucial for future economic growth and productivity in Suffolk. While rollout of broadband and mobile infrastructure will be delivered nationally through DCMS, the Government will engage with Suffolk on a regular basis on delivery plans in the region, particularly where they involve hard to reach rural areas. The Government is committed to achieving nationwide coverage of gigabit capable broadband by 2030 and to ensuring that rural areas are not left behind including in Suffolk. Procurements covering Suffolk commenced in April 2022, and regular Project Gigabit programme updates will be provided demonstrating progress in delivering for communities across the area.

## Innovation, Trade and Investment

91. Through the deeper devolution trailblazer deals announced in the Levelling Up White Paper, Government will bring together a holistic package of powers, roles, functions and strategic relationships to grow the private sector at a local level.
92. The trailblazers are designed as a blueprint for other institutions with a Level 3 devolution deal, and Government will draw lessons from this approach to make a similarly broad and holistic offer to Suffolk in due course. This offer aims to build the resilience of businesses and households in Suffolk to cost of living pressures, strengthen Suffolk's global competitiveness and empower local entrepreneurs.
93. This offer will explore the following, and potentially other, options to:
  - a. Empower Suffolk to be able to secure greater private investment in local priorities.
  - b. Strengthen Suffolk's local innovation capacity to help realise the potential of local innovation assets and the innovation potential of small and medium enterprises.
  - c. Help to realise the global export potential of local businesses in Suffolk and maximise the local benefits of international trade, recognising Suffolk's high ambition to leverage the opportunities presented by green trade and its own green growth potential as, for example, Freeport East develops.
  - d. See Suffolk play a greater role in supporting local businesses to improve their productivity.
  - e. Engage Suffolk in the delivery of digital infrastructure and potential economic and public service applications of data and data science.

## Public Service Reform

94. Government supports Suffolk in its ambition for public service reform. Government commits to working with Suffolk to explore initiatives to improve delivery of public services jointly with local partners, such as how best to support residents with multiple complex needs. Where appropriate, and as part of its Levelling Up agenda, Government will also consider devolving further powers to Suffolk County Council to support public service reform.
95. Good quality data are essential for understanding local need and the place-specific issues affecting people in an area. As part of the Government Statistical Service's Subnational Data Strategy, the Government is working to improve the dissemination of subnational statistics to empower local decision makers, including in Suffolk, to use data-led evidence to respond to local priorities.
96. Suffolk County Council will work with the Government to understand the existing barriers to data sharing and utilisation in their area, and explore where improvements to the quality of, or access to, data could support them in achieving Suffolk's local ambitions.
97. Suffolk, in partnership with the Government, will work with the Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner to agree an appropriate arrangement to ensure close collaboration and productive joint working on public safety.

## Suffolk County Council's commitments underpinning the deal

98. Suffolk County Council will work with the Government to develop a full implementation plan, covering each policy agreed in this deal, to be completed ahead of implementation. This plan must be approved by the Government prior to delivery. Any issues of concern with the subsequent delivery of this deal will be escalated to ministers and leaders to resolve, in keeping with the letter and spirit of devolution.
99. Suffolk County Council will be required to evaluate the impact of the Suffolk Investment Fund. Suffolk County Council and the Government will jointly commission an independent assessment of the economic benefits and economic impact of the investments made under the scheme, including whether the projects have been delivered on time and to budget. This assessment will be funded by Suffolk County Council but agreed at the outset with DLUHC and HM Treasury and will take place every five years. The next five-year tranche of funding will be unlocked if the Government is satisfied that the independent assessment shows the investment to have met the objectives and contributed to economic growth. The gateway assessment, as outlined in paragraph 40, should be consistent with the HM Treasury Green Book, which sets out the framework for evaluation of all policies and programmes. The assessment should also take into account the latest developments in economic evaluation methodology. The Government would expect the assessment to show that the activity funded through the scheme represents better value for money than comparable projects, defined in terms of a benefit-to-cost ratio and considered in the strategic context of local ambitions for inclusive growth across the whole geography.
100. As part of the implementation of the deal, Suffolk County Council and the Government will agree a process to manage local financial risk relating to the deal provisions.
101. Prior to the first directly elected leader election, the Government will work with Suffolk County Council to give the public and stakeholders – including Parliament – a clear understanding of: the powers and funding that are being devolved to Suffolk; where accountability sits as a result of this deal; and how decisions are made.
102. Suffolk County Council will continue to adhere to their public sector equality duties, for both existing and newly devolved responsibilities.

**THE END**