

September 2016 report for the Thredling Division from Cllr Matthew Hicks

Government Devolution consultation closes but Suffolk residents can still give their views

The consultation closed on Tuesday 23 August and people across Norfolk and Suffolk have been offering their views and feedback on a proposed devolution deal and associated governance arrangements for the two counties. Devolution is about transferring certain decision-making powers and funding down from Central Government to a local area. It means that decisions are taken close to where they have an effect. The majority of councils across Norfolk and all in Suffolk, along with the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership supported the deal and agreed to ask the public for their views.

Key elements of proposed Norfolk/Suffolk deal are:

- £25m funding each year for the next 30 years (£750m) to support economic growth, development of local infrastructure and jobs (this will increase the local economy to £43bn and create 95,000 jobs by 2026)
- £130m investment over five years to support the building of new homes across Norfolk and Suffolk
- Over the lifetime of the deal around 200,000 homes could be delivered
- Control of a £225m transport budget for the next four years
- Control of an existing c£20m annual adult skills fund to ensure the training offer matches the needs of local businesses and the local labour market
- Control of an existing c£2m annual Apprenticeship Grant for employers

As part of the consultation, people have been asked for their views on more decisions being taken locally, rather than at central government and whether they support the creation of a combined authority chaired by a directly elected Mayor for the two counties. Over 2500 submissions were made as part of the consultation by people completing the online survey. Ipsos-Mori have also been carrying out more than 6000 phone surveys across the two counties to ensure decision makers have a representative sample of views. Suffolk County Council plans to continue its own consultation until October when Councillors will be asked to give the proposals final approval. The consultation will soon go live on www.suffolk.gov.uk

Raising the Bar Community Fund grants are now available

A community fund programme that has been created by Suffolk County Council as part of its Raising the Bar Programme is now open for applications and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations are urged to apply. The Raising the Bar Community grant of up to £20,000 is available for projects aiming to provide a positive environment where learning is valued and children are encouraged; In particular, the grant looks to support the involvement of parents and carers in a way that complements learning at school and early years' settings. Funding is available to voluntary and community Sector organisations, and is recognition of the valuable contribution that the voluntary and community sector can make to the education of children and young people. In projects, the organisations will be expected to work in partnership with schools or nurseries.

- Enabling parents to support their children with their learning at school/nursery, through additional learning in the home (e.g. reading with their children).
- Helping parents to value their children's education and engage with their school.
- Building parental skills and confidence in supporting their children's education and development.

For further information please visit: <http://suffolkcf.org.uk/grants/raising-the-bar-community-fund/>

New pilot scheme 'Adopt a Post Office' launched in Suffolk

Suffolk Trading Standards and Suffolk Police have been working with local post offices to trial the new "Adopt a Post Office" scheme to share information about scams directly with communities. Launched this week at the One Stop Stores on Ipswich Street, Stowmarket and at Post Office on Penzance Rd, Kesgrave, Trading Standards and local neighborhood policing teams will be able to work with sub-postmasters and staff to highlight various types of crimes that could affect their customers such as mail scams, internet dating scams and rogue doorstep traders. Officers will not be permanently based within the branches but through their relationship with the Post Office, the teams can be present at periods of high footfall enabling them to interact with more residents.

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