

County Councillors Report July 2023

Devolution Deal for Norfolk:

The County Council are in talks with government over the offered devolution deal for Norfolk. The deal would initially see £600m being given to NCC over 30 years to spend on economic development, infrastructure and skills training. As part of the deal the government expects NCC to adopt a governance model which includes a directly elected leader (in addition to the 84 elected members) who will take charge of the way money is spent. This governance model requires legislation to be passed in parliament which is not expected until the autumn of this year. The Council will vote on adopting the governance model and thus accepting (or rejecting) the deal at its meeting in December.

The same deal was offered to Suffolk and Cornwall. Suffolk has decided to put negotiations on hold and Cornwall are trying to negotiate a deal without a directly elected leader. In Norfolk district borough and the city councils are not included in the talks and will not benefit from any extra money.

A47 Improvements:

Although not the responsibility of the County Council the long-awaited improvements to the A47, especially between Tuddenham and Easton, are expected to start construction this year. Three proposed schemes were the subject of a judicial review which was recently rejected by the High Court. The Tuddenham to Easton section will provide a roundabout connection to the proposed western link which will connect the A47 to the A1067. The western link is a high priority project for the County Council, not least because of the 49,000 homes planned for the Norwich area.

Changes at County Council:

You may recall that the leader of the Council, Andrew Procter, was forced to step down due to serious illness. His successor, Kay Mason-Billig, decided to change the governance arrangements for the council. Under the previous model the leader was named as "executive leader" which meant that the elected leader of the council also acted as the chief executive. The new leader decided to revert to the previous governance model which required the appointment of a chief executive officer. After a recruitment process, Tom McCabe, former head of paid service, was appointed as chief executive.

Mark Kiddle-Morris, Member for Necton & Launditch.