English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

Based on the latest guidance and summaries of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, here is a comprehensive list of powers that Mayors of Strategic Authorities will have under the new legislation.

.Powers devolved to Mayors.

1. Housing and strategic planning

- Strategic Authorities will be required to have a Spatial Development Strategy, SDS, (this power is devolved to the strategic authority and not the mayor). An SDS complements and does not replace local plans.
- The Mayor will have:
  - Similar planning powers to the Mayor of London. This includes the ability to direct refusal of planning applications of potential strategic importance (eg large or prominent schemes), and the ability to call in these applications (for example, unpopular schemes). In practice this power will only cover a handful of schemes, with the vast majority continuing to be managed by the planning authorities. These would be significant housing and commercial developments.
  - Powers for mayors to raise a mayoral community infrastructure levy. This levy:

    Is intended to support local infrastructure projects that align with the MCCA's local growth plan.

    Will be governed by specific voting and governance arrangements, likely requiring a majority vote within the combined authority or strategic authority.

    Builds on the existing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) framework but gives mayors a strategic funding tool to support regional development.

    This funding stream could be used to provide local funding for strategic infrastructure projects such as the NWL or other larger infrastructure schemes where it has become increasingly difficult for NCC to provide local match.
  - The Bill extends the powers to create Mayoral Development Corporations to all mayors of Combined Authorities (CAs) and Combined County Authorities (CCAs). The Bill will require Local Planning Authorities to be consulted and to approve the MDO. Where the LPA(s) do not approve the order, the Mayor can request that the Secretary of State approve the order instead. This request is not automatic and will likely be dealt with through an Inquiry procedure, led by an Independent Planning Inspector.

    Only a small number of MDCs have been established so far, and are usually used to bring forward regeneration of complex urban sites. The mayor would need the MCCA to approve a budget to establish and run an MDC.

2. Transport and Infrastructure

- As anticipated in some transport powers will transfer from NCC and SCC to the MCCA – day to day management of local roads and budgets for road maintenance etc will still come to the county council.

- The Bill allows Strategic Authorities to charge a transport levy to their constituent councils to fund their activities. This funding would be expected to come from funding provided to the authorities from the DfT. The Strategic Authority will also be able to pay grants to constituent councils to support the delivery of transport activities.
- The Mayor will have:
  - Oversight of local transport networks, including bus franchising or enhanced partnerships and integrated ticketing.
  - Power to designate a key route network that are considered some of the "most important local roads in an area", they can then "direct constituent highways authorities" in the use of their powers.
  - Influence over major infrastructure projects and investment priorities.

3. Economic Growth and regeneration

- The Bill introduces a statutory duty to produce a Local Growth Plan (LGP) to include shared priorities with government and an investment pipeline.
- The Bill requires certain public organisations to "have regard" to the shared priorities in the LGP. This is helpful as government and other bodies will be required to cooperate with and have regard to the plan. Organisations can be named and will be required to consider the shared priorities when bidding for government funding.
- Strategic Authorities will be required to work with LGPs on local projects that deliver social or economic benefits for local communities.
- The Mayor will have:
  - Power to lead local economic strategies.
  - Authority to attract investment and support business growth.

4. Skills and employment support

- Authority over adult education budgets and skills provision, together with the budget.
- Power to shape local training and employment initiatives.

5. Health and well being

- A new legal requirement for MCCAs to 'have regard' to the need to improve the health of people in their areas and reduce health inequalities.
- No powers around health are being taken from the county council.
- The Mayor will have:
  - o Influence over local NHS and public health priorities.

6. Police and fire

- The Bill will allow a mayor to take over the functions of more than one PCC and more than one Fire and Rescue service (Mayors can only take on one of each at the moment)
- PCCs are not expected to merge – but FRAs could. FRA mergers are possible under existing legislation; however mergers would be determined locally.
- Oversight of community safety initiatives.

7. Climate and Environment

- No new powers. Government is committed to exploring future opportunities in this area.

Flexibility Mechanisms • Right to Request Further Powers

- Mayors can formally request additional powers, funding, or partnerships from central government.
- This will be helpful as it would enable the Norfolk and Suffolk MCCA to secure additional funding and powers which have been given to other MCCAs.
- It also provides an opportunity to negotiate powers over areas such as flooding and energy.

Powers of Competence

The Bill gives Mayors of Strategic Authorities new powers, to give them the means to drive growth, collaboration and improvements within their areas. These are:

1. **General Power of Competence -** allows mayors and their authorities to do anything an individual can do, unless explicitly prohibited by law.
2. **Power to Convene -** enables mayors to convene local partners (e.g. public services, businesses, voluntary sector) to address strategic challenges.
3. **Duty for Partners to Respond -** when a mayor uses the power to convene, local partners are legally required to respond.
4. **Duty to Collaborate -** requires mayors of neighboring Strategic Authorities to formally collaborate where appropriate.

<u>RPG</u>

Deadline fast approaching

Deal received but Minster who sent deal has gone

Waiting to see if deal still valid?

NCC have backed a report which says replacing Norfolk's eight councils with one would save £36.2m per year and deliver the biggest benefits to residents.

Norfolk County Council's cabinet today selected a single unitary council as its preferred option, which will be developed into a detailed proposal and submitted to the Government in September.

County council leader, Kay Mason Billig, said the council had gathered and considered evidence and listened to the public's priorities - value for money, no fragmentation of services and keeping services as local as possible.

She said: "That all adds up to one Norfolk and one council."

Norfolk County Council has studied data and evidence on the pros and cons of one, two or three unitary councils and asked the public what mattered to them about local councils and services. It is proposing that its preferred option is one unitary council, covering the whole area.

Having one council would cut costs, join up services for residents and ensure strong financial foundations, according to the draft options appraisal report considered by the cabinet.

The county council's report says that the key benefits of one council for Norfolk are:

- A single council would mean consistent services, delivered across the whole of Norfolk, with equal levels of Council Tax, service quality and services available, wherever you live
- It would save £36.2m per year, by cutting duplication, reducing the number of chief officers and councilors and having economies of scale when purchasing services. Start-up costs would be repaid in a year

- It avoids the risks and costs of splitting up complex, county-wide services like adult social services, children's services and highways - which would incur extra costs of between £20.4m and £33.6m per year, if there were two or three unitary councils
- It recognizes the role of greater Norwich as an economic center of activity for the whole county and highlights the importance of not creating an artificial boundary around it, which would stifle growth

The report's conclusion says: "We have an opportunity to create a new council for Norfolk which can:

- Be a powerful advocate for Norfolk - speaking up and influencing as one voice for local communities, creating more impact, both with any Norfolk/Suffolk mayor and with the Government, businesses and investors
- Be accountable - our residents would know that one council was responsible for all of the services, removing confusion. There would be one set of locally elected councillors, with one set of elections
- Be efficient - removing duplication and bureaucracy and joining up services to deliver better value for money
- Enable devolution - through a single, clear and concise set of strategic priorities for Norfolk and simplifying decision-making
- Avoid the use of untested models for delivering critical services to children, families, older people and some of the most vulnerable of our residents"

Now that a preferred option has been selected, there will be further engagement. The preferred option will be developed into a detailed proposal, to be submitted to the Government by 26 September. Ministers will take the final decision on what council structure to adopt.

The draft interim submission report highlights a range of potential benefits from having a single unitary council system, including:

- ending confusion - people would know that one council would deliver all services in their area.
- delivering value for money - with fewer sets of senior officers, councillors and council headquarters, freeing up money to invest in services.
- joining up services, to make them more effective - such as bin collection and waste disposal and enabling housing and social care to work more closely together;
- ensuring strong local links, through close working with town and parish councils, or local boards.
- **Strong where it counts, local where it matters - one council means better services for Norfolk**
- People in Norfolk will benefit from better services, local decision making and bigger savings, if the county's eight co
- That's the message from a new county council report (12 September), which details how a single council for Norfolk benefits.
- The Government wants to have fewer councils, known as unitary authorities, which run all services in their area. It h September.
- County council leader, Councillor Kay Mason Billig, thanked residents for their comments earlier this year, which sho services and avoiding the need to split services up.
- She said this would be best delivered by having a single council, as thorough analysis had shown Norfolk would receiv
- She said: "Our vision is a new unitary council that is 'Strong where it counts, local where it matters'.

- "It gives us the greatest opportunity to improve services, give local people more say on decisions that affect them, r maximum amount to be reinvested to deliver for Norfolk.
- "A single unitary fully meets the Government's criteria and sets the foundation for a stronger, simpler, and more eff
- Norfolk currently has a county council and seven district councils. This means that, wherever you live, you will have s care and highways) and some by a district council (such as waste collection and planning).
- Norfolk County Council has proposed one new council, South Norfolk District Council proposed two and the remaining
- The county council's draft business case highlights a range of key benefits of having one council, including:
- Saving £39.8 million per year, compared to the current eight councils – money that can be invested in improving serv
- Removing duplication and joining up services that are currently divided between councils, such as adult social service
- A focus on meeting local needs, by setting priorities at neighbourhood area committees, closer working with town an through integrated neighbourhood teams
- Avoiding the risk of splitting up crucial, county-wide services such as adult social care, children's services and highw
- Being in a strong position to boost Norfolk's economy, by having a plan for the whole county
- The report says: "The outcome of our comprehensive options appraisal is clear that the best option for Norfolk is a Norfolk is the only option that fully meets the Government's criteria, ensures a robust, forward-looking model for N transition costs and will deliver better outcomes for communities."
- The draft business case report will be considered by the council's strategic and corporate select committee at 10am at https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meetir
- The full council will discuss the report at 10am on 25 September, before the cabinet takes a final decision on the bu
- **Background:**
- **Why are councils facing changes?**
- The Government has called for local government reorganisation, to make the current system simpler and more cost e
- Since 1974, Norfolk has had a county council and seven district councils. This means that, wherever you live, you will social care and highways) and some by a district council (such as waste collection and planning).
- The Government now wants to replace county and district councils with new unitary authorities, which run all service other parts of the country.
- Ministers have invited detailed submissions from Norfolk's eight councils, by 26 September. Norfolk County Council proposed two and the remaining six district councils proposed three.
- **Why isn't there one proposal for Norfolk?**
- Like in other areas across England which are undergoing local government reorganisation, Norfolk's councils could no proposals are being submitted – for one, two and three new councils
- **Why does the business case support one council?**
- The council's business case report says: "The outcome of our comprehensive Options Appraisal is clear that the best council for the whole of Norfolk is the only option that fully meets the Government's criteria, ensures a robust, forw savings, has the lowest transition costs and will deliver better outcomes for communities."
- The report says that one council would deliver the biggest savings of £39.8 million per year and repay start up costs reduces savings to £1.5 million per year, with set up costs of £63.3 million. Having three councils would cost £33.8 r up costs of £81.8 million.

- The report stresses that: "The single unitary council will be a new organisation built from the best of all our resourc something even greater."
- **How will savings be made?**
- The £39.8 million annual savings, compared to the current cost of running eight councils, includes savings from havin costs. This will help the new council to be viable, in the face of continuing budget pressures across local government opportunity for robust and financially sustainable local government in Norfolk, without inherently worsening the chal
- **When will a decision be taken?**
- Norfolk's councils will submit their business cases by 26 September. The Government will then stage a public consult making a decision. This is expected early next year. We will publicise the Government's consultation, once it has beer
- **When will changes take place?**
- Once the Government's decision is announced, Norfolk's councils will work together on detailed plans for the new cou 2027, when the new council or councils will be set up in "shadow" form, before they formally replace the current eigl

Emergency alert reminder

- The UK government carried out a national test of the Emergency Alerts system on Sunday 7 September at 3pm. Compatible mobile phones and tablets received an alert, make a loud siren-like sound and vibrate.
- Did you get it?
- More information about emergency alerts is available on the government website here.

Flu medication and vaccines

- The Government is removing restrictions on prescribing flu medications outside the usual season to reduce winter pressures and allow year-round treatment. This will allow patients to receive treatment sooner and ease winter pressures by allowing outbreaks to be contained
- The government's announcement coincides with the NHS launching this year's improved flu vaccine programme on 1 September 2025. The autumn rollout kicks off with flu vaccines for millions of children and pregnant women. The NHS national booking system has also opened for all eligible individuals to book their winter flu and COVID-19 vaccinations, with appointments starting from 1 October 2025.

Booster vaccines for children

- The latest annual uptake data on childhood vaccines published by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) shows that 18.6% of children, almost 1 in 5, have not received their pre-school booster jab. UKHSA and NHS England are calling for parents and healthcare workers to catch up on missed vaccinations as schools start the autumn term.

- The 4-in-1 pre-school booster helps protect children against 4 serious illnesses - polio, whooping cough, tetanus and diphtheria. Given from 3 years 4 months of age, the vaccine boosts the protection provided by previous vaccines given to babies. It ensures children have the essential protection they need when starting primary school. Without this booster, children are not fully protected.

Norfolk celebrates 2 million journeys on Beryl bikes, e-bikes and e-scooters

- Norfolk County Council, in partnership with Beryl and National Grid, is celebrating a major milestone for the county's innovative shared transport scheme, which has now recorded more than **two million journeys** since its launch in March 2020.
- The total of 2,057,859 trips covers an impressive 5.79 million kilometres, the equivalent of riding around the world

144 times. By swapping car journeys for two wheels, riders have helped save around 990 tonnes of CO , keeping Norwich's air cleaner, streets less congested, and communities healthier.

- Over 100,000 people have used the scheme, with the average active rider taking 20.8 trips.
- Journeys are made up of:
- 424,186 pedal bike rides
- 407,292 e-bike rides
- 1,226,350 e-scooter rides
- Feedback from users shows that 41% of these journeys would otherwise have been made by driving or being a passenger in a private car, and a further 24% would have taken a taxi or ride-hailing service, while 5% would have used a motorbike or moped instead.
- With now over 190 bays across Norfolk paired with improved infrastructure* for people on bikes more residents than ever can access convenient and sustainable transport."
- This success plays a vital role in helping us meet our net-zero ambitions and improve air quality across the county."
- The latest Beryl Annual Rider Report, based on feedback from Norwich riders in 2024, also showed that the top three reasons for signing up were convenience (60%), speed (39%), and cost-effectiveness (30%), while the primary purpose for most users was commuting to work (35%).
- Launched in March 2020 as a bike share scheme, e-bikes were added in July 2020, followed by e-scooters in January 2021.
- Beryl vehicles can be hired via the free Beryl app, available on the App Store and Google Play. E-scooter riders must hold a valid UK driving license and are encouraged to provide feedback to support ongoing service improvements.
- * Infrastructure improvements have helped to increase the number of people using beryl.
- Since the completion of the Heartsease Roundabout in Norwich statistics show an increase of 60% in beryl use across that junction.
- The cycle lane we added to Ipswich Road in Norwich has seen a 165% increase in the amount of beryl journeys along the road compared to before.
- The recently opened Travel Hub on Dereham Road has boosted Beryl usage on that route by an impressive 190%

<u>Street works</u>

- Norfolk County Council is welcoming a set of national recommendations that could make roadworks quicker, better planned, and less disruptive for residents. These suggestions come from a recent Parliamentary review into how street works are managed across the UK.
- Here's what's been recommended:
- ✅Repairs should last at least 5 years
- ✅Fines for poor planning or delays
- ✅More control for councils over roadwork approvals
- ✅Developers must share work plans and timelines
- ✅Advance planning info to be mandatory
- In 2024/25, Norfolk County Council issued 44,000+ streetworks permits and we issued £685,000 in fines for overruns and non-compliance.
- We know how disruptive roadworks can be for residents and road users across Norfolk. These recommendations are a positive step forward in making streetworks more efficient and

accountable. The Department for Transport is due to respond back to the Transport Select Committee in September 2025 and we look forward to working with national and local partners to implement any changes they may make to maximise the benefit for our communities.

Norwich Castle

The refurbished Castle Keep is now open. Spectacular

Scams

Scam Alert - Fake 'Parking Charge Notice' text messages

Scam Alert - Fake FCA messages

Rogue Trader Alert - Doorstep cold callers offering roofing work

Scam Alert - Task based job scams

Rogue Trader Alert - Doorstep cold callers offering driveway cleaning

Safety Alert - Updated urgent 'stop drive' recall for some Citroen C3, C4, DS3, DS4 & DS5 models

Scam Alert - Emails claiming to be from 'BT'

Scam Alert - Emails claiming to be from 'British Gas'

Scam Alert - Emails regarding 'Council tax payments'

Scam Alert - Online surveys to receive high value items

Cold Calling Alert - Telephone cold callers regarding solar panels