



An open letter from the Suffolk Business Board in support of devolution

Suffolk is full of entrepreneurship, innovation and ideas, and our growing international £21billion economy is one of the best connected in the UK. We are home to some of the world's top businesses, and thousands more smaller enterprises here have big ambitions for growth.

The Suffolk Business Board has recruited top talent from our key sectors to drive our ambition to grow inward investment, jobs and new skills so that we can remain at the forefront of the global enterprise and innovation revolution. Our new economic strategy, endorsed by business, local authorities and government ensures that we can look to the future with confidence as one of the UK's top enterprise hubs.

The ambitions and opportunities business can deliver needs the active support of a streamlined governance structure that can help create the conditions for growth. Which is why, as local business leaders, we endorse the proposal to create a Mayoral Combined County Authority across Norfolk and Suffolk – a transformative opportunity to unlock growth, give more power and decision-making authority to local people and shape a more prosperous future for our region.

Devolution means decisions made closer to home, by people who understand our local strengths, challenges and ambitions and want to help make things happen. It offers the opportunity to create high-quality jobs, attract long-term investment – including for vital improvements to infrastructure – and transform the delivery of public services in a way that reflects Suffolk's unique character and needs.

We support devolution because it will empower local leaders and a newly elected mayor to accelerate economic growth. We know that those who live, work and learn in Suffolk are ready and eager to gain new skills, access quality jobs and shape their own future.

An elected mayor will bring guaranteed multi-year investment and strategic leadership. This will support initiatives like regenerating Ipswich, expanding clean energy innovation in East Suffolk, delivering new homes, growing our digital and technology sectors and improving transport networks. They will have greater funding opportunities and clearer accountability for delivering on these priorities. The benefits of devolution will extend across Suffolk, reaching towns, villages and rural communities throughout the county.

Despite the challenging business environment in recent years, Suffolk's business community has shown remarkable resilience and innovation. Devolution will amplify our voice at national and regional forums, such as the Council of Nations and Regions, where mayors are increasingly invited to influence policy and funding decisions. Without a mayor, Suffolk and Norfolk risk being sidelined.

Suffolk and Norfolk have a proven track record of constructive collaboration across both public and private sectors. Working together in recent years, we have already attracted over £1.3bn in investment and supported the creation and safeguarding of more than 15,300 jobs. Our local economies are closely aligned, our new Business Boards already work closely together, and our shared Local Growth Plans identify clear and compelling opportunities for better jobs and skills. Devolution will bring the investment needed to deliver these plans.

We view devolution as the route to faster and more local decision-making, tailored skills development, reliable transport, and positive investment and growth opportunities for Suffolk's business community.

That is why the Suffolk Business Board fully supports this devolution deal and encourages Suffolk County Council to endorse it, and work alongside the business community to shape a stronger, self-determined future for our region.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark Pendlington". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Mark Pendlington

Chair of the Suffolk Business Board