

**News from County Councillor Dr Marie Strong**  
**[marie.strong@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:marie.strong@norfolk.gov.uk) or 07920 286 597**

Devolution: A basic definition is the statutory granting of powers from central government to govern at a regional or local level; a form of decentralization. Or quoting the EDP 'what devolution means in reality remains an enigma'.

There is much information, discussion, change rolling out as I write. Even if there was room for all such information much will have changed by the time you read it. So in brief:

Nationally: The All-Party Political Group (APPG) For Reform, Decentralisation and Devolution in the UK commissioned Lord Bob Kerslake and a panel of members to conduct an inquiry into all aspects of devolution in the UK. Read the full report and supporting evidence at [www.local.gov.uk/devolution-inquiry](http://www.local.gov.uk/devolution-inquiry).

East Anglia: Details of the draft 'deal' from the Government to East Anglia can be found on NCC website supplementary agenda to the Policy & Resources Committee (21 March '16). At that meeting there was considerable debate and the only conclusion reached was that the draft deal should be taken to full council..

East Anglia as stipulated in the draft deal includes: Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Peterborough – in all 22 county, city, borough and district councils. Cambridgeshire has expressed concerns including the size of the proposed East Anglia, preferring for themselves a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough only footprint and opposing any form of mayor - originally an option, now said to be essential for any deal. The question is yet to be addressed if there will be changes to the draft deal if any councils pull out.

As to Norfolk councillors there is a general acceptance of the benefits of powers being devolved. There is certainly a requirement that any devolved powers must be accompanied by sufficient and new money; there is concern as to the appointment of a mayor for the whole of East Anglia.

All and any aspects of the draft deal will be considered at full council, by all 84 county councillors, at 10.00 am on Monday 11 April '16 at County Hall. The meeting is open to the public to observe.

What I can assure you is that there will be a public statutory consultation before the deal comes back to the council for a final decision on the part of Norfolk County Council. And that on the assumption a major will go ahead there will be elections in May 2017.

NCC Parish Partnership Continues: Funding of £380,000 for 122 small scale highway projects across Norfolk has been approved by county councillors. The money from Norfolk County Council's Parish Partnership scheme will be matched by parish and town councils who were invited in June 2015 to put in bids for funding for schemes important to their local area. The most popular bids have been for vehicle activated signs (to remind drivers of their speed and known as SAM2). Other popular schemes are Trods – the simplified lower cost alternative to footways which are often constructed using recycled road surface material. And helping to promote safety at schools will be part-time advisory 20mph speed limit signs with flashing warning lights installed outside 12 schools.

Parking Infringements: There have been increasing complaints regarding vehicles parking across entrances. This constitutes an obstruction and as such can be dealt with by the police. If

there are yellow lines the matter can be dealt with by traffic wardens. No one wants to come home and find their entrance to home blocked but for mature and disabled residents this is particularly distressing. Both the police and traffic enforcement body have been asked to pay particular attention to the problem. If you are stranded outside of your home, or someone you know is, you can ring the police on the non-emergency number 101. You can also report parking problems direct to [parking.operations@west-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:parking.operations@west-norfolk.gov.uk). Even if the traffic wardens cannot attend at the time of the report it is important to make the report because they feed into the tasking schedules.

SNAP (Safer Neighbourhood Area Partnership): Check with your town or parish council and ask who represents your area on SNAP. For Wells division the meetings are held at one of the police stations at Fakenham, Holt or Wells. Every three months a decision is made by council representatives as to the three important issues the police will focus on during the following three months - parking infringements could be one of the issues. Representatives do not have to be councillors so if your area is not represented why not volunteer?

Recycling Centres: From April 1 until September 30 recycling centres will be operating under the new Summer opening hours timetable and will be open from 9am until 5pm. To find your nearest recycling centre, full information about opening hours and days and what you can and cannot take to the sites, please visit [www.norfolk.gov.uk/recyclingcentres](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/recyclingcentres)