

Contact us...



Our lines are open from 8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday

In the event of an emergency you can contact us 24/7 using the telephone numbers below



City & Neighbourhood
0191 520 5550

Here to help with enquiries such as; waste and recycling, parks, highways, parking, licensing, pest control, community safety, elections and visitor information



Life, Family & Learning
0191 520 5553

Here to help with enquiries such as; libraries, education, families information, fostering and adoption, youth services, births, deaths and marriages



Home & Money
0191 520 5551

Here to help with enquiries such as; council tax, housing and housing advice, planning and building control and welfare rights



Business Services
0191 520 5554

Here to help with enquiries such as; business rates and business investment and advice



Health & Wellbeing
0191 520 5552

Here to help with enquiries such as; social care and concern for welfare, disabled parking badges, concessionary travel passes and sports and leisure



Council Switchboard
0191 520 5555

Please use our Switchboard service if you know the name of the person you wish to speak to or visit us online at www.sunderland.gov.uk
You can also use our minicom on 0191 525 0075 or TYPETALK

February 2016 Communitynews SPECIAL EDITION

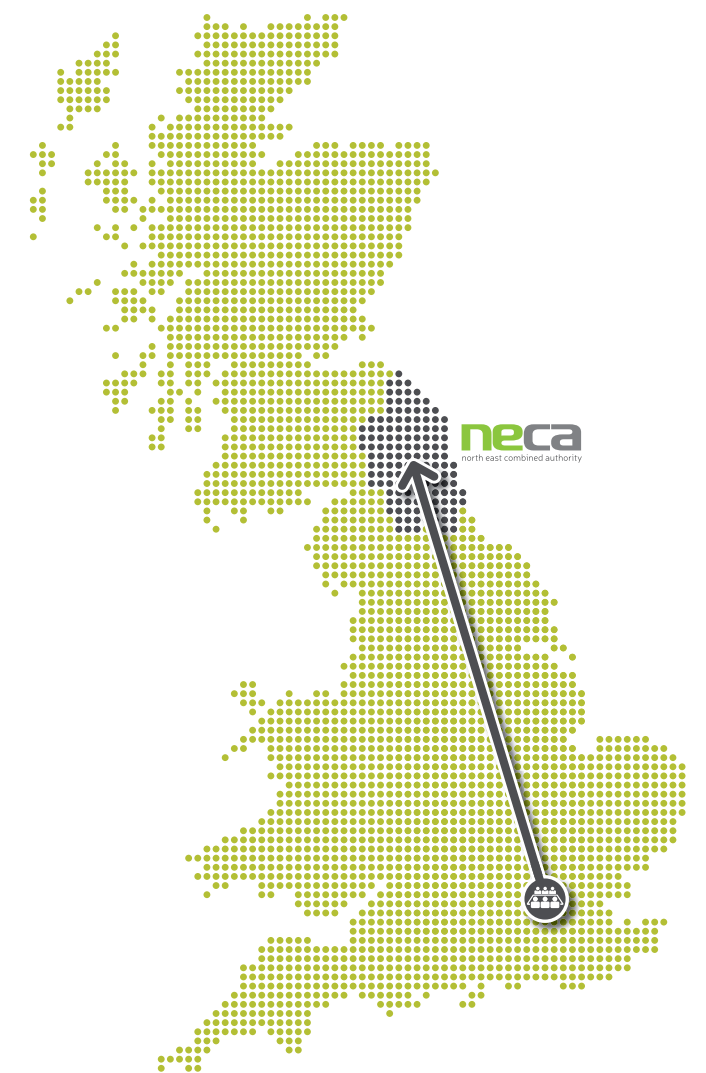
Published by Sunderland City Council

WELCOME...

...to this special issue of Community News which is all about the proposed Devolution Agreement for the North East. You'll find more detail on the background, where we are now and how you can have your say on the proposals.

North East Combined Authority

Devolution agreement



The story so far

In October last year, the leaders of the North East Combined Authority (NECA) - which is made up of Durham County Council, Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council, Northumberland County Council, South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council - signed an agreement with the Government, committing us to further discussions on devolution.

This was not the final agreement and only the main themes or headlines of a potential devolution deal have been established so far. The initial document had to be developed within a tight timescale to fit with the Government's preparations for the annual Spending Review (November 2015) but before we sign up to any formal deal, we want to know what people think.

The purpose of devolution

There has been a lot of attention focused on the national 'devolution debate' in recent months and deals or outline agreements have been made with only a small number of combined authorities or 'city regions' in England, including ours.

Put simply, devolution is about moving control of an agreed set of issues and functions away from Central Government. Instead, decisions would be made and resources allocated within the local areas they affect.

The idea behind devolution is that devolved resources can be more efficiently and effectively directed towards driving economic growth within the different regions, where decision makers have a much better understanding of the key issues that need to be addressed. It's about moving away from the centralised, 'one size fits all' model that we currently have.

You can find out more about devolution at: www.local.gov.uk/devolution

What is covered by the NECA Devolution Agreement?

The Government is offering:

- To give the North East new opportunities to support businesses and create more jobs. That includes giving the North East an extra £30m a year - over 30 years, to set up an Investment Fund to help business growth.
- To let us develop our own plans to improve post-16 education and training so that people have better skills and better prospects.



Do it online...

- Report missed refuse collections or damaged/missing bins
- Arrange a bulky waste collection
- Request maintenance of grass, trees and water features
- Report fly tipping
- Request a copy of a birth, death or marriage certificate
- Book an appointment to register a birth or death
- Book an appointment to give notice of a marriage or civil partnership
- Report litter
- Report anti-social behaviour and hate crimes
- Report an issue with street lighting
- Sign up to garden waste collections

...and much more at www.sunderland.gov.uk



- To let us take more decisions ourselves about transport investment, particularly public transport.
- To allow us to do more to identify opportunities for investment in new housing.
- To give us more say over how money from the European Union is spent in the North East.
- To allow us to review health and social care provision and develop plans to improve and integrate services so that people receive better care.

The full agreement and details of the things it is proposed to devolve, can be found at: www.sunderland.gov.uk/devolution

Establishing an Elected Mayor

In return for devolving these powers and funds, the Government requires the Combined Authority to revise its current governance and decision making arrangements, establishing an Elected Mayor as the chair.

The Mayor would be elected in 2017 by the people living in the NECA area, and chair a Cabinet made up of the constituent council leaders. The Cabinet would make decisions about spending across the area on the issues and functions within the Combined Authority's remit.

Implications of a devolution deal

While these proposals offer a limited amount of devolution at this stage, and most public services would be unaffected, a deal, if agreed, could lead to more devolution in the future.

For now, agreeing the sort of devolution deal described here will not in itself mean any significant changes to the way in which the seven councils are run and operate.

Local people have begun to see changes in the way Sunderland City Council services are delivered. These are as a result of our own service transformation programme, in response to reductions in Government funding and resulting spending pressures, which won't change for the foreseeable future.

As already outlined, devolution would mean more power and flexibility at the Combined Authority level rather than the local authority level, for a specific set of issues and functions. The Government would also provide some additional funding to help generate investment in economic growth across the whole area. Most of the costs of running the Mayoral Combined Authority would also need to be met from this sum.

Devolution is not on offer to individual councils as the focus is on driving forward regional economies, building on the combined strengths of the individual local authority areas, and creating more opportunities for business growth and employment for local people.

What do you think?

Before Sunderland City Council, as a member of the North East Combined Authority, makes a decision about a devolution deal with the Government, it is important that we understand the opinions of local people and any concerns you may have.

Please tell us what you think by submitting your views online at:

www.sunderland.gov.uk/devolution

or by completing and returning this page to us in an envelope (no stamp needed) at:

Devolution
Freepost RTHL-TJHS-TXGA
Sunderland City Council
PO Box 102
SUNDERLAND SR2 7DN

Responses must be received by: Wednesday 17 February 2016

1. Do you agree that some strategic decisions about spending to drive economic growth should be made at a more regional level, instead of by Central Government?

Yes No Don't know

Please tell us why

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. What are your views on the proposals for devolution to the North East Combined Authority, as described here; do you see any particular advantages or disadvantages in these proposals?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. If you have any further comments, please write them here.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

