

10 February 2010

Chief Executive  
All Suffolk local authorities

BY EMAIL

*Dear Chief Executive,*

## **PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE UNITARY STRUCTURES**

In response to the Invitation to councils in England issued by the Secretary of State on 26 October 2006, Ipswich Borough Council submitted on 25 January 2007 a proposal for future unitary structures. I wrote to you on 5 December 2007 informing you that their proposal was being referred to the Boundary Committee for further advice on possible unitary structures in Suffolk. Following the Secretary of State's request for advice the Boundary Committee began its work in responding to that request and on 7 December 2009 the Boundary Committee provided its advice. On that same day I wrote to you informing you that there would be a period of six weeks up to 19 January 2010 for representations to be made regarding either the Boundary Committee's two recommended alternative proposals or Ipswich Borough Council's original proposal for unitary structures.

I am writing now to inform you that the Secretary of State has decided not to take his statutory decisions on the proposals relating to Suffolk at this time. The Secretary of State shares the Boundary Committee's assessment that the alternative proposals they have put forward for Suffolk meet the five criteria (affordability, broad cross section of support, strategic leadership, neighbourhood empowerment, and value for money and equity on services), with the proposal for a single unitary county meeting them to a greater extent. The Secretary of State has also assessed afresh the

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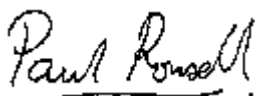
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unitary proposal made by Ipswich Borough Council and has concluded that he shares the view of the then Secretary of State in December 2007 that this proposal, if it were implemented, would not be reasonably likely to deliver the outcomes specified by the affordability criterion.

From the representations received the Secretary of State is clear that there is wide agreement across the county that there should be a unitary solution in some form. However, it is equally clear to him that neither of the unitary proposals which the Secretary of State considers meet the criteria is supported by all the principal councils in the county. Accordingly, the Secretary of State has concluded not now to take his statutory decision on any of the Suffolk unitary proposals before him, and to invite all the Suffolk councils, with their Members of Parliament, consulting other stakeholders and through a county constitutional convention, to reach a consensus on a unitary solution for that area. We will be writing shortly to you with further information about this initiative.

If you have any queries about the substance of the decision you should write in the first instance to Ian Barber at [Ian.Barber@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Ian.Barber@communities.gsi.gov.uk).

*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Rowsell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**P Rowsell**