



Parish *Bulletin*

Local Government Review
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Tell the Boundary Committee exactly what you think

Suffolk Coastal's Leader has reassured residents and community groups that the Boundary Committee for England (BCE) is ready and willing to hear whatever views they may have on the future shape of local government in Suffolk.

People had until September 26 to make their comments on the BCE's draft proposals, but as went to press Suffolk Coastal's call for the deadline to be extended had won the backing of the BCE - see page 2 for more details.

"What is becoming increasingly clear is that some people, and indeed some town and parish councils, are not sure exactly what they can say to the BCE, and feel that they have to choose from what has been currently proposed by the BCE," said Cllr Ray Herring, Leader of Suffolk Coastal.

"I would like to reiterate that the BCE has made it clear that it will welcome all comments and that it is ready to review and alter its proposals in the light of the responses it receives.

"People must not believe that there are only the two options open to them, or the alternative final solution of one giant Suffolk. I am aware of local town and parish councils who feel that they must opt for one of these choices even though they are very reluctant to give their backing to what has been proposed.

"It has probably not been made clear enough that if they want to ask for a different type of unitary set-up, whether it be this Council's option or any other, they then should tell the BCE. Equally, I hear that some of our local councils would prefer no change or an improved version of the current two-tier structure. Whatever your views, my advice is that the BCE wants to hear from you," added Cllr Herring.

The BCE announced on July 6 its draft proposals of a North

Haven unitary council covering Ipswich to Felixstowe, and a Rural Suffolk covering the rest of the county but with Lowestoft moving into Norfolk, with a fall-back alternative of one giant Suffolk council but still minus Lowestoft.

On July 6, the BCE Director, Archie Gall, wrote to all the Councils saying that **'the Committee has not finalised its proposal for a pattern of unitary local government in Suffolk. In the light of representations received, the Committee will review its draft proposal and consider whether it should be altered before submitting it'**.

"Since then, the BCE has indicated that it will be looking at whether Lowestoft should be brought back into Suffolk, a move clearly made after responses from the public and community leaders.

"The BCE has already shown a willingness to change its proposals, as Mr Gall said it would. If people, or local councils, community or business leaders, are not happy with the current options, then the BCE is ready to hear the suggested improvements, so my advice is do not feel hand-cuffed by the draft proposals," added Cllr Herring.

People should now respond as soon after September 26 as possible to give the BCE their views on what the future shape of Suffolk should be. There is a special online form on www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncil/future or a similar facility at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/boundary-reviews/all-reviews/eastern/suffolk/ **suffolkstructural review** or email reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk or write to Review Manager, (Norfolk/Suffolk Review), The Boundary Committee for England, Trevelyan House, Great Peter Street, London SW19 2HW. All responses will appear on BCE's website.

Make Suffolk Three

Suffolk Coastal is pressing ahead with its own proposals for three councils that it will submit to the BCE by September 26 that are based on an East Suffolk, West Suffolk and an Ipswich and South Suffolk Council.



Linking Lowestoft and Felixstowe into East Suffolk would mean that one council would be responsible for all the coastal and estuary defence issues.

At the same time, more than any other part of the county, East Suffolk is home to regional centres of excellence, with Felixstowe and Lowestoft Ports, BT/Adastral Park, its 'power corridor' of low carbon energy providers, as well as Snape Maltings and Sutton Hoo.

A large part of East Suffolk is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, while it also has many market towns and picture-book villages and some of the highest quality of life ratings in the country. It is therefore little surprise that so many tourists visit the attractions and resorts in East Suffolk, and that nearly ten per cent of jobs are linked to tourism.

Suffolk Coastal wins call for more time

The Boundary Committee for England (BCE) has agreed to receive and take into account representations received after September 26, after Suffolk Coastal asked for people to be given more time to respond to the draft proposals on the future shape of local government in Suffolk.

Everyone had been given until September 26 to give their views on the draft proposals from the BCE and offer their alternatives, but it was confirmed only on September 4 that some of the key financial information will now be published a week later than planned.

"I wrote to Archie Gall, the Head of Boundaries Review and Director of the BCE, asking him to accept responses from local residents and community organisations for a week after its original deadline because some of the most important

information will now not be available until September 19," said Cllr Ray Herring, Leader of Suffolk Coastal.

"I know of many town and parish councils in our district who were reserving judgement on the draft BCE proposals until the financial workbooks for them had been produced.

"This whole process is being driven through by the Government at great speed, but I am sure that one extra week for people to give their considered views should be something that should not derail the process and I am pleased that Mr Gall has seen the sense of this request," added Cllr Herring.

The delay in meeting the original deadline in producing the financial workbooks has been caused by August's announcement by the BCE that it wanted both its draft proposals, and its fall-back option of one giant Suffolk council, to also include the implications of including Lowestoft in Suffolk.

When the BCE produced its original draft proposals in July it caused amazement by offering options that no council in Suffolk had suggested, and a unanimous storm of protest with its plan to include Lowestoft in Norfolk

Since then, Suffolk Coastal's Leader, along with other councils and community leaders, has been pressing for Lowestoft to be brought back into Suffolk, preferably as part of a new East Suffolk Council if unitary government is introduced.

"I have previously raised my concerns about this frantic 30-day exercise which is determining the future of local government in Suffolk for the next 30 years and that all of us, the councils and the BCE and most importantly the people and the communities we serve, need a few more weeks - whether it is to provide all the relevant information, or to chew over the facts before reaching conclusions that will have a massive impact on communities across Suffolk.

"This whole consultation process is fundamentally flawed because since July 6 people have been asked for their views on how their councils and services are run in the future and one of the key questions they have is about the future level and cost of those services.

"All that any of us have truthfully been able to say is that unitary councils will be cheaper, and while large figures have been banded around, there has been nothing to back those glib promises up. We need people to have more than seven days to be able to consider them, and an extra week is really the bare minimum that the BCE should consider offering," added Cllr Herring.

"I would be reluctant to agree a formal extension to the consultation timetable. However, in the circumstances, the Committee would be content to receive and take into account representations received after September 26," wrote Archie Gall to Cllr Herring on September 11.

This special edition of the Parish Bulletin has been produced by Suffolk Coastal's LGR team. To keep up to date on LGR issues, visit www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/yourcouncilfuture or email lgr@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or call 01394 444435