

East Suffolk

strategically powerful locally accountable

May 2008 briefing



Why is Suffolk being reviewed?

The Government has requested the Boundary Committee for England to review whether, and how, unitary local government could be introduced in Suffolk.

The current structure is based on a County Council providing cross-district services such as education and social services and seven District Councils with responsibility for local services such as waste services, planning and leisure etc.

Suffolk Coastal believes that an East Suffolk unitary council, covering all of our existing district, all of Waveney and part of Mid Suffolk and Babergh, is the best unitary option for communities living in this area. We also support an Ipswich unitary council based on its existing boundaries, and a West Suffolk unitary council. This approach has the support of the Leaders of Suffolk Coastal, Waveney, Ipswich and St Edmundsbury Councils.

- ◆ We are opposed to there being only one giant Council for all of Suffolk - we do not believe that the local interests of our residents could be best served by potentially one of the largest Councils in England. Our view is that such a massive new Council would be remote from local communities and require significant layers of bureaucracy which would not be cost effective management.

- ◆ We are opposed to Waveney being linked with a Norfolk council because it has far more in common with East Suffolk.

- ◆ We support an Ipswich unitary on its existing urban boundary and support our town and parish councils that want to remain outside of the aspiring city.

Why East Suffolk?

- ◆ East Suffolk brings together communities with shared life-styles and goals, an area with unspoilt countryside and coastline, an exceptional quality of life, bustling seaside resorts, tourist attractions, high performing schools, low crime rates, and a magnet for innovative world-class industries.

- ◆ The East Suffolk communities face shared challenges - improving transport links; combating rural isolation; affordable housing for local people; economic competitiveness; coast and environmental management; regenerating coastal towns, encouraging market towns and traditional industries like agriculture. These are local challenges best addressed by a local council working with the East Suffolk communities.

- ◆ Although the exact east/west boundary is not fixed, the population of East Suffolk will be around 250,000, making us large enough to have a powerful voice on the regional and national stage and small enough to ensure that local people are shaping local priorities.

- ◆ What unites the communities of East Suffolk also makes it unique and radically different from Ipswich, the rest of the county, and Yarmouth.

- ◆ East Suffolk is committed to better services and even better value for money. It will use its experience and IT to minimise costs while increasing access to services and decision-making. Our customers will be able to access services from our existing network of offices, backed up with a network of one-stop shops for customers, shared with partners, at existing facilities like libraries and TICs, and within five years any setting-up costs will have been paid back.

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Why East Suffolk? continued

- ◆ East Suffolk would work with Primary Care Trusts to provide coordinated support to elderly people and other vulnerable groups, with the Police to tackle crime, and with established regional partnerships for regeneration and housing.
- ◆ East Suffolk would have about 80 councillors, each representing 2,500 to 3,500 people, and so able to be locally involved and more accountable. With no central base, we would take our meetings out to our communities. Power will be delegated downwards, with a new network of Area Committees to respond to local needs and priorities, backed up with a bigger proposed role for town and parish councils including management of services and local decision making.

East Suffolk - strategically powerful and locally accountable for communities

- ◆ We will be your local council, with local offices, locally accountable councillors, local area committees, with local people making local decisions.
- ◆ Our area committees will reflect local needs, working closely with town and parish councils, as well as local representatives of key local partners such as the health and police services, backed up with a locality manager to ensure local priorities are being tackled effectively.
- ◆ We know how important community organisations are in helping deliver quality of life and we want to work closer together so that we can share expertise to jointly deliver even better services for and with our local communities.
- ◆ Community groups will be key members of the partnerships that shape the key priorities for East Suffolk and the communities that make it up.

East Suffolk - strategically powerful and locally accountable for businesses

- ◆ We will be focussed on the challenges facing our district, finding local solutions to local problems like skills shortages, numeracy and literacy, and the mismatch between local training and education and what local employers actually need.
- ◆ We will fight for and deliver the improved transport links that East Suffolk desperately needs
- ◆ We will focus on the need for East Suffolk to receive its fair share of spending and investment without having to compete with the very different socio-

economic needs of Ipswich and West Suffolk.

- ◆ East Suffolk will put businesses at the heart of making the strategic decisions for this area

East Suffolk - strategically powerful and locally accountable for towns & parishes

- ◆ Our new area committees would give town and parishes a stronger voice in the decisions about spending, services and policies in their patch.
- ◆ The network of around 230 town and parish councils will be a key means for East Suffolk to engage with residents and keep in touch with their concerns and views.
- ◆ Town and parishes will help us deliver services in the way that best and most efficiently meets local needs
- ◆ Town and parishes will have their say in shaping the strategic policies that will guide the way that all public services are provided in East Suffolk.

East Suffolk - the best option for our communities. Have your say.

We do not think that a 'one size fits all' solution will deliver the services our residents want and deserve, or be efficient and accountable. We also believe that the special things that make our communities unique could be derailed by the challenges facing a potential city. All the proposed concepts for Suffolk are on www.boundarycommittee.org.uk

These are important discussions that could radically alter the way that you receive and can influence your local services. If you know what type of local government structure you would like to see in the future then make your views known now.

Contact the Boundary Committee - 0207 271 0680, or email kanwer@boundarycommittee.org.uk or write to Kalim Anwer, Review Officer (Suffolk), The Boundary Committee for England, Trevelyan House, Great Peter Street, London, SW1P 2HW.

You can also contact the Suffolk Coastal Local Government Review team - 01394 444435, or lgr@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk or write to LGR team, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Council Offices, Melton Hill, Woodbridge, IP12 1AU.

This briefing (May 2008) was produced by the Suffolk Coastal LGR team.