

Mr Kalim Anwer
Review Manager (Norfolk and Suffolk Reviews)
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
LONDON SW1P 2HW

Please ask for: Andrew Good
Direct line: (01449) 724802
Fax number: (01449) 724627
Your reference:
Our reference: APG/PB
Email: andrew.good@midsuffolk.gov.uk

14 May 2009

Dear Kalim

Review of Local Government Structure (Suffolk) – Mid Suffolk District Council’s Response

Thank you for providing a further opportunity to respond to the Committee’s revised proposals. This is the Council’s (MSDC) formal response.

MSDC reiterates its strong support for keeping Suffolk united, with a single unitary council covering the whole county, and associated arrangements to ensure strong local focus, and strong focus on the urban centres of Ipswich and Lowestoft.

The Council is very solid in its desire to see a single unitary Council established for the reasons already set out. In doing so it rejects the alternative proposal of a Ipswich/Felixstowe unitary because it could not be established upon sound foundations. There is no widespread evidence of public support; what support exists comes from Ipswich focused organisations. That is understandable. However, unlike the single unitary proposal which does have widespread support from all over Suffolk, particularly Town and Parish Councils, a future Ipswich/Felixstowe unitary is unlikely to be a harmonious organisation. The prospect of political instability and local division, caused by a predominantly urban focus, is likely to be ever present and is something that the Boundary Committee must take into account in offering a sound solution to the Secretary of State.

You will have received separately from Suffolk County Council (SCC) our jointly endorsed submission document¹, which builds on the previous submissions from MSDC/SCC in September / October 2008, and reiterates the compelling rationale for a One Suffolk solution.

In addition, MSDC at Full Council formally

- reiterated its support for a One Suffolk single unitary,
- endorsed the Boundary Committee's proposals that Community Boards (working title) should have their democratic structure and make up included within any new authority's constitution, and that further consideration be given to more shared public access facilities and the possibility of a Public Service Village (PSV) in the Stowmarket (or possibly Needham Market) area.
- endorsed a recommendation that, in the event that a two-unitary proposal is put forward, that the Boundary Committee include the seven potentially affected Mid Suffolk parishes within the Rural Suffolk proposal.

The Council's position was summarised in a letter sent to the parish councils in Mid Suffolk. The associated papers with supporting rationale are attached.

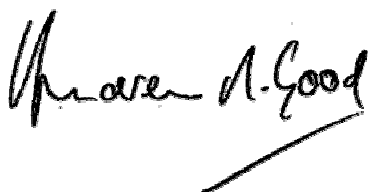
¹ ONE SUFFOLK, The Response To Boundary Committee Further Consultation, From Mid Suffolk District Council and Suffolk County Council, 14 May 2009.

In relation to the seven Mid Suffolk parishes affected by the two-unitary proposal, I feel that it might help to illustrate more clearly their very rural nature by attaching a photo montage, and would hope that the Boundary Committee will agree that the seven parishes should be managed as part of a single unitary or, if the decision is to split into two, then the seven should be part of a predominantly rural unitary and not split off from the other 115 parishes of mid suffolk where local connectivity and a sense of place is very strong.

I trust that the Boundary Committee will give this input due consideration, along with the previous input last year. I think we all now share the desire to see this process brought to a timely conclusion, so that we can get on with the challenging process of implementation, and ultimately realising the benefits of moving to a unitary structure, now adopted by the majority of councils in the UK.

As previously stated consistently, our preferred model is a powerful one, and is based on the need for Suffolk to speak with one voice, for citizens to re-engage with local government, and to reduce running costs. The Council is very happy to continue to discuss further with the Boundary Committee and in due course with the Secretary of State, and assist in concluding the right solution for the people of Suffolk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Hill". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Chief Executive

Electronic copy to: mcaller@boundarycommittee.org.uk
reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk
andrea.hill@cexec.suffolkcc.gov.uk

Encl:

1. MSDC letter to Parishes summarising the Council decision, 29 April 2009
2. MSDC Council paper, Boundary Committee Review, 23 April 2009
3. Pictures of the seven MSDC parishes affected by the two-unitary proposal, May 2009