

Summary

Draft proposals for unitary local government in Norfolk and Suffolk

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by the UK Parliament. One of our duties is to advise the Government on local authority bids for unitary status.

On 6 February 2008 we were requested to advise the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on alternative unitary structures of local government in Norfolk and Suffolk. This request for advice followed bids for unitary status from Norwich City Council and Ipswich Borough Council.

On 7 July 2008 we published our draft proposals, on which comments are invited.

Our draft proposal for Norfolk is:

- a Norfolk unitary authority comprising the existing county of Norfolk and the Lowestoft area of Suffolk

Our draft proposal for Suffolk is:

- an Ipswich & Felixstowe unitary authority and a Suffolk unitary authority comprising the rest of the county apart from the Lowestoft area

Our proposal for Norfolk is set out in detail in chapter 5 of the report and for Suffolk in chapter 6. Maps illustrating our draft proposals are set out in Appendix B of the report.

Our approach to this review, and the general and specific considerations we have had regard to in conducting our work, are set out in chapter 2 of the report.

What happens next?

There will now be a period of 12 weeks, during which we welcome views on our draft proposals. All representations should be sent to reach us by **26 September 2008**.

We have not finalised our proposals for unitary patterns of local government in Norfolk and Suffolk. In the light of representations received, we will review our draft proposals and consider whether they should be altered. It is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with our draft proposals.

We have also included in the report other patterns of unitary local government that we considered had merit, which people may wish to bear in mind when considering the draft proposals.

In Norfolk we considered:

- a Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft unitary authority and a Norfolk unitary authority comprising the rest of the county
- a Norwich unitary authority on expanded boundaries and a Norfolk unitary authority comprising the rest of the county and the Lowestoft area of Suffolk

In Suffolk we considered:

- a Suffolk unitary authority comprising the existing county apart from the Lowestoft area

We welcome views and evidence from all those who have previously written to us and those we have not yet heard from.

The Committee places great importance on ensuring openness and transparency in the way we deal with all representations. Accordingly, representations received will be made available for public inspection at our offices in Trevelyan House. Submissions will also be available on our website, www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

If you make comments during this period of the review, and do not want all or any part of your response or name made public, please state this clearly in the response. Any such request should explain why confidentiality is necessary, but all information in responses may

be subject to publication or disclosure as required by law.

After 26 September 2008 we will consider all the representations we have received and start to formulate our final advice, which we have been asked to submit to the Secretary of State by 31 December 2008.

You can express your views by using our online form at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk, or by writing directly to:

**Review Manager
(Norfolk and Suffolk Reviews)
The Boundary Committee
for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

**Tel: 020 7271 0512
Fax: 020 7271 0505
Email: reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk**

Once we have provided our advice there will then be a further period of four weeks during which representations may be made directly to the Secretary of State. She may then accept, reject or modify any proposal that we make. She may also ask us for more information. It will be for the Secretary of State to decide if and when any new unitary authorities are to be created.

Further information

The full report is available to download at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.