

# News Release



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*EMBARGOED UNTIL 12 NOON 7/7/08*

**July 7, 2008 – 90/08**

## **WHAT A CARVE UP! LEADER SLAMS REORGANISATION PROPOSALS**

**Suffolk Coastal's Leader has reacted angrily to today's (Monday) announcement by the Boundary Committee of England (BCE) for the proposed reorganisation of Suffolk, describing the process to date as a farce.**

**After a whirlwind four months of looking at how local councils in Suffolk could be reorganised, the BCE has proposed merging Ipswich with Felixstowe and Kesgrave, and leaving the rest of the county minus Lowestoft run by one giant council trying to serve 400,000 people.**

**"This is a farcical situation whereby the BCE have ignored the solutions offered to them and are instead looking to impose something which has no understanding of the communities of Suffolk," said Cllr Ray Herring, Leader of Suffolk Coastal.**

**"In a very short time period, a range of interesting proposals for the future were offered, yet the BCE have come up with a solution for Ipswich based on a couple of maverick proposals and paired it with an option that nobody requested, with an alternative that again nobody wanted.**

**"This was a golden opportunity to provide better, more efficient services that engaged with and served local communities, but it has been squandered with a carve-up that has butchered our county and our districts. One option is unworkable while we have been given an alternative which is unthinkable. I note that the BCE's motto is that 'democracy counts'. Well it has not lived up to that claim so far but I can only hope for all our sakes that it will now listen to the voice of our communities," added Cllr Herring.**

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**The BCE is now requesting that responses be made on the proposals by September 26 by filling in an online form, or in writing. The BCE said it reached its draft proposals based on five criteria – affordability, value for money services, neighbourhood empowerment and engagement, broad cross section of support, and strategic leadership.**

**“Putting aside the annexation of Felixstowe, Kesgrave and 19 of our parishes for a moment, I find it impossible to fathom how the rest of Suffolk Coastal can best be served by becoming part of a massive council with 400,000 people.**

**“Looking at the criteria, I cannot see how creating one geographically massive new council will be locally accountable, while to date there has been absolutely no support for such a hare-brained idea.**

**“Our residents are used to receiving good, value for money services, and I honestly cannot see how creating one of the country’s biggest councils will continue to deliver that success,” added Cllr Herring.**

**Four of the eight councils in Suffolk, including Suffolk Coastal, had backed proposals for three unitaries to be created, offering locally accountable, strategically powerful new councils, in East, West and Ipswich, while two others had backed at least an East/West split to take account of the differing challenges and needs of the communities of Suffolk.**

**“At the root of this review was the Government’s desire to achieve unitary status for Ipswich, but they have done it in a way that ignores logic and community ties. Our proposal would have seen Felixstowe in the same council as Lowestoft which made far more sense as they both face similar coastal defence and regeneration challenges. Now we have the ridiculous prospect of three different councils managing our county’s coastal defences.**

**“The communities that make up Felixstowe now face the threat of becoming part of an aspiring city that needs to expand to achieve its goals, and with urban and social issues that are not those of a resort town.**

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**“I am equally concerned about our communities between Felixstowe and Ipswich who have made it crystal clear that they do not want to be seen as some kind of Outer Ipswich. Their voice has been ignored so far, and what chance would they have to protect their largely rural lifestyles in a new unitary that will inevitably have urban regeneration as its biggest goal?**

**“The next part of the process is for the public and interested parties to have their say on the proposed options, and I would strongly urge everyone to put forward their views. I can only hope that they will pay more attention to our communities than they have to their representatives,” added Cllr Herring.**

**The proposed unitary Ipswich, would include Felixstowe and Kesgrave and these other parishes of Suffolk Coastal Brightwell, Martlesham, Bucklesham, Nacton, Falkenham, Newbourne, Playford, Foxhall, Purdis Farm, Great Bealings, Rushmere St Andrew, Hemley, Stratton Hall, Trimley St Martin, Kirton, Trimley St Mary, Levington, Waldringfield, and Little Bealings, as well as 19 parishes of Babergh, and seven in Mid Suffolk.**

**Responses to the draft proposals can be made by filling in an online form at [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk) or email [reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk](mailto:reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk) or in writing to Review Manager (Norfolk and Suffolk Review), The Boundary Committee for England, Trevelyan House, Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HW. The period for responses closes on September 26.**

**Ends**