

SUF/FDR/0675



c/o Hertfordshire Archives  
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The Boundary Committee for England  
Trevelyan House  
Great Peter Street  
LONDON  
SW1P 2HW

14 May 2009

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Boundary Committee Review Further draft proposals for unitary local government in Norfolk and Suffolk**

I welcome this opportunity to comment upon the recently published proposals for unitary local government in Norfolk and Suffolk. As chair of the East of England Regional Archives Council (EERAC) my main concern and that of my members is for the future of the archive services in both of these counties, but our comments given below will be equally as relevant if applied in general to the local government of these areas.

EERAC is one of nine such Councils set up in the English regions by the National Council on Archives in 2001 to represent the views of all concerned with archives and to provide an archive voice in the region. Its membership includes both professional archive staff from the whole of the Eastern Region but also representatives from local history organisations and other interested bodies who regularly use archives in a variety of record repositories.

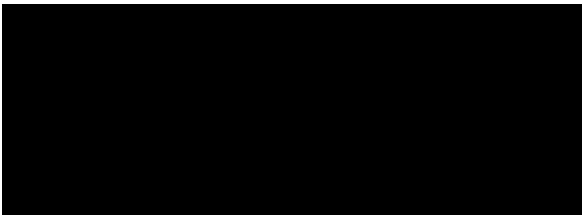
EERAC fully supports the proposals for a single unitary authority in both of the historic counties of Norfolk and Suffolk. This option will continue to maintain the already strong sense of community identity in both of these areas. The Record Offices of both counties have recently been judged as 4 star archive repositories by a survey conducted by The National Archives (published in *Record Keeping* April 2009). They have a proven track record of service to their local communities and are recognised and valued both in their respective counties and beyond. The maintenance of single, unified counties would continue to reflect their historic identity, bringing together communities and building a cohesive response to the challenges facing the

respective counties as a whole. Single authorities, with economies of scale, are best placed to deliver affordable front line services tailored to meet the needs of their local communities.

The results of The National Archives Self Assessment over the last three years have consistently shown a strong link between performance and size of archive services - 'larger services are more likely to be high-performing than smaller ones'. The Government's recently published consultation document on archives, *Archives for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, echoes this view and proposes 'fewer, bigger, better' archive services to increase sustainability within the sector. The choice of a single unitary authority in both Norfolk and Suffolk will ensure that these high quality, award winning archive services will be given a green light to continue to improve their already efficient services. Doubts have already been expressed by The National Archives on the long term sustainability of archive services in other parts of the country where the decision to adopt joint arrangements between two or more district councils has been made. This form of arrangement is more likely to lead to instability where disagreements have arisen between partner authorities, for example over levels of financial support.

The most effective way to ensure the long term future of archive care in the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk is through a single unitary authority. EERAC therefore fully supports this model.

Yours faithfully,



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ABC has no views on the structure of local government. Its concern is that the names and terminology of local government do not perpetuate the confusion in the public mind between local government and the historic counties. Hence, we request that, in making recommendations to the Secretary of State on the names of the proposed new local authorities, the Boundary Committee follows the following ethos:

- None of the new unitary authorities should use the style 'County Council'. They should be known simply as 'Council';
- None of the new unitary authorities should make unqualified use of an historic county name.

**Specifically with regards to the Suffolk Structural review, we are in total agreement with the names proposed by the Boundary Committee for England.**

**We do, however, strongly recommend that the new authorities are not permitted to carry the style 'county council', but rather that of 'council'. This will emphasise the unitary nature of these councils and also help to establish a new, clear corporate identity for the authority(ies).**

In summary, we recommend the following names for the putative new unitary authorities.

Pattern A:

Constituent Area	ABC Preferred name
<i>Suffolk CC</i>	Suffolk Council

Pattern B

Constituent Area	ABC Preferred name
<i>Ipswich BC, parts of Suffolk Coastal, Babergh, Mid Suffolk DCs</i>	Ipswich & Felixstowe Council
<i>Remainder of Suffolk CC</i>	Rural Suffolk Council

**Peter Boyce (Chairman)**

**On behalf of the Association of British Counties**