



*Press release from
Suffolk Preservation Society and Suffolk ACRE
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Don't lose sight of communities' voices, say groups

Two of the counties leading bodies devoted to safe-guarding Suffolk's communities today urged caution over plans to reorganise local government.

Suffolk Preservation Society's director, Richard Ward, said today that care must be taken to listen to the voice and views of the people – which is often ignored.

And the chief executive of Suffolk Acre, Wil Gibson, said it was important to marry better organisation and saving money with maintaining the individuality of each community. He also stressed that ordinary residents needed a voice in this process.

Mr Ward said: "Bigger is not necessarily better, more economical or better value for money. Let's ensure all options are considered!

"Nothing proposed appears to address the ever growing feeling by local Suffolk communities that their voice and views do not count.

"Larger local government structures are going to make them feel more removed and unable to influence their future or changes affecting them. This is especially the case for town and parish councils who generally are ignored in reviews of the nature again now proposed and on planning issues."

Mr Ward suggested recently that going back to pre-1974 type structures should be explored.

Suffolk Acre chief executive, Dr Gibson, said: "Many of us can see the perceived merits of unitary councils, but we need arrangements that bring the benefits of economy of scale with benefits of being part of distinctive community. Any future process must have at its core an effective community engagement process to give voice to ordinary residents."

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Notes to editors

For more information contact:

Richard Ward, SPS, tel 01787 247179, or

Isabel Cockayne, Geronimo Communications, tel 01284 768935

Email Isabel.cockayne@geronimocommunications.com

