



## ***Respecting the past, shaping the future***

Press release from  
Suffolk Preservation Society  
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### **Grim predictions for future infighting as SPS appeals for plans to be scrapped**

A leading campaign group has predicted plans to change the shape of local government will do nothing more than prompt a grim period of infighting between Suffolk's councils as each jostles for position as key player in the new unitary authority.

Suffolk Preservation Society has appealed for the Boundary Committee's proposals for a single council for the county to be scrapped – saying efforts should instead be made to “fine tune” Suffolk's existing structure so that the services offered to residents can be improved.

The plea comes as SPS called the Boundary Committee's entire consultation into question, saying it had failed to take into account the views of huge numbers of local people who asked for the existing system to be retained.

In addition, the benefits of introducing a model of government designed for urban areas in a largely rural county simply remain unproven, the society says.

“While nobody would claim that the existing system of local government in Suffolk is perfect, it doesn't need total replacement to make it more effective and efficient,” said Richard Ward, society director. “However for some bizarre reason, the option to simply fine tune the system we already have in place seems to have been ruled out.

“During the last consultation, many of those who responded expressed a desire for the existing structure of local government to be retained and improved.

“We find it astonishing that absolutely no reference is made to that groundswell of public opinion in the current consultation report. We therefore have to ask – what was the point of carrying out the consultation in the first place?

“On top of that, we still haven't actually been asked whether or not we want a unitary authority in Suffolk, yet it seems the Boundary Committee is determined to force the change on us – regardless of what local people think.”

In its hard-hitting objection to the plans, the society also warned that the most likely outcome from driving through the change would be a sustained period of infighting between the district and council councils.

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## **Grim predictions for future infighting as SPS appeals for plans to be scrapped 2**

“As has happened elsewhere in the country, the infighting between the districts and county will start as they seek to secure the upper hand and power base in any new structure,” added Mr Ward. “How this can be good for the people of Suffolk is anyone’s guess.

“Our prediction is that our new unitary authority will be based on a modified county council which has swallowed up the functions of our district councils, such as planning. This will take decision-making even further away from local people while reducing the service they receive

“I very much doubt we will end up with a structure which is fit for purpose, or which makes the huge savings we have been promised. The outcome will, put simply, be the worst of both worlds.”

### **Ends**

#### **Note to editors:**

SPS, founded in 1929, originally worked to protect the county’s buildings and landscape. Today, the society has broadened its focus to help shape Suffolk’s future, largely campaigning for sensitive and appropriate development, more and better quality affordable homes and to ensure sustainable infrastructures are in place to support the county’s communities.

#### **For more information please contact:**

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