



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

Press release from  
Suffolk Preservation Society  
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### **“Let’s build on what we’ve got,” society pleads**

A leading campaign group has urged the Boundary Committee to finally listen to the people of Suffolk and improve the local government structure already in place rather than push through unpopular proposals for a dominant unitary authority.

In its formal response to the latest round of consultation, Suffolk Preservation Society has again questioned the rationale for introducing a new model of local government in the county – saying its benefits for a largely rural area remain unproven.

Instead, it has pleaded with the Boundary Committee to listen to the strong and consistent message delivered by the county’s communities – to improve and build on the structure already in place.

“It is time that the Boundary Committee threw out these flawed, unpopular proposals and finally started to listen to what the vast majority of people in the county want,” said Richard Ward, society director.

“The message has been sent to them loud and clear – retain our current structure and work instead to enhance its performance and efficiency so that it can deliver improved services at a reduced cost.

“While we are the first to admit that the current structure of local government in Suffolk is not perfect, it does promote democracy by keeping decision-making local and helping to empower individuals and communities. There is absolutely nothing in the Boundary Committee’s proposals which justify its total abolition.

“We believe the very rationale for change is thin, tentative and, in many instances, unsound. Even the consultation on which it is based is fundamentally flawed, having failed to ask Suffolk’s people whether they even wanted change in the first place.”

In its official objection, the society also raised fears that changing the county’s current system would result in “huge uncertainty, upheaval, disruption and cost”.

In addition, it would see local communities distanced from the decisions which affect them, while leaving the role of hugely important town and parish councils hanging in the balance.

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“There is strong support for the purpose, role and independence of town and parish councils in the county,” added Mr Ward. “They are all too often the unsung heroes of local government, reliant on limited resources and dedicated volunteers to deliver local services. They are also best placed to represent local people and ensure they are at the heart of making the decisions which affect them.

“But this has not come across in any stage of the review nor does it in the Boundary Committee’s proposals. Indeed, the proposals themselves leave the future of these important bedrocks of democracy hanging in the balance.

“This fact alone suggests that the Boundary Committee has no real understanding of the needs of Suffolk and its people. It appears more and more that the committee is simply hellbent on imposing a model of local government on us which ignores the real issues, problems and opportunities in the rural county.

“Put frankly, it is time they started to listen now – before it is too late.”

### **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:**

Richard Ward, SPS Director, on 01787 247179, or Liz Hearnshaw at Zenith Public Relations on 01284 760025.