



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

Press release from  
Suffolk Preservation Society  
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### **Society's plea – "abandon costly plans before it's too late"**

A leading campaign group has warned that the county's most vulnerable groups could suffer if the vital services on which they rely are cut to pay for costly changes to the county's local government structure.

Suffolk Preservation Society has appealed to the Secretary of State to abandon plans to replace the current two-tier system of local government with centralised unitary authorities. It says the Boundary Commission has failed to show how the new structure would make significant financial savings without cutting the front line services which are vitally important to many sections of the county's community.

Instead, SPS has urged the Department for Communities and Local Government to improve and build on the structures already in place, such as sharing back office functions between district and county councils and working in closer partnership.

"We remain wholly unconvinced of the benefits that any unitary local government structure would bring in a rural area such as Suffolk," said Simon Cairns, SPS Director. "We live in an extremely diverse county to which the 'one size fits all' mantra simply does not apply. Our systems of local government have to be able to respond to these distinct local needs, otherwise the most vulnerable members of our community will be the ones who suffer.

"The Boundary Committee insists this new system of government will bring huge financial savings. We wholeheartedly disagree and feel the costs of introducing unitary authorities could only be met through a reduction in front line services and raiding the coffers of our district councils. This approach is cynical, short sighted and unsustainable. As well as reducing the quality of local services on which so many of the more vulnerable members of our community rely, it will only exacerbate the long-term financial position of local government in Suffolk, in turn putting more pressure on taxpayers.

"In addition, we feel that the current structure of local government in Suffolk is better placed to serve our communities effectively as it keeps decision-making local and helps empower individuals and communities.

"It is also capable of significant improvement, without the need for wholesale replacement with all the associated upheaval, costs and disruption of public services which introducing a new system would bring. As such, there is no significant justification in the proposals which warrant this move.

“We would ask the Secretary of State to now formally throw out these proposals and work instead to enhance the performance and efficiency of our current structure so that it can deliver improved services at a reduced cost.”

**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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