



15 December 2009

Bob Blizzard MP
Rt Hon John Gummer MP
Michael Lord MP
Chris Mole MP
Richard Spring MP
David Ruffley MP
Tim Yeo MP

Dear Suffolk MP

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESTRUCTURING

We are writing to update you on our efforts to secure the best outcome for the people of Suffolk from the review of local government.

We last wrote to you in July 2009 after the judgement in the High Court which quashed the draft proposals that the Boundary Committee had issued on 19 March 2009. We were very pleased with that result, as we were keen that the Boundary Committee should engage in a meaningful dialogue with local authorities prior to making its recommendations to the Secretary of State.

On 2 December, the Court of Appeal set aside that judgement, which cleared the way for the Boundary Committee to proceed to making its recommendations to the Secretary of State without taking into account our polling evidence or any business case for the Ipswich/East/West option. These were submitted on 7 December. There is now a period during which the Secretary of State will take submissions from interested parties, which ends on 19 January 2010.

A restructuring can be ordered by laying a statutory instrument before the House and so there is still parliamentary time to lay the statutory instruments necessary for a restructuring of local government in Suffolk in 2011.

We will now be engaged in a twin track process:

- We will be making our case directly to officials and Ministers in Whitehall, and asking the Secretary of State for Local Government – if he is still intent on bringing forward restructuring – to accept our strong case for an Ipswich/East/West split.
- Later this week we will be seeking leave to appeal to the Supreme Court to determine whether the Boundary Committee's process has been unfair (given amongst other matters its failure to undertake dialogue with the local authorities).

Although our preferred outcome of this process would be a three unitary pattern comprising Ipswich, East and West Suffolk, we do not support the move to unitary authorities at any cost. Rushing through change is likely to result in a transition which simply adds functions to Suffolk County Council's existing structure, rather than creating anything new and more effective. We also question the cost of transition to new unitary authorities at a time of recession and public expenditure restraint.

We would welcome any action you can take, or message that you might send to the Secretary of State, to persuade him not to proceed with a botched restructuring.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Mark Bee
Leader,
Waveney DC

Cllr Geoffrey Jaggard
Leader,
Forest Heath DC

Cllr John Griffiths
Leader,
St Edmundsbury BC

Cllr Ray Herring
Leader,
Suffolk Coastal DC