



Cabinet 17 September 2008

Boundary Committee Review of Suffolk: Borough Council's Response (Sep 08/09)

1. **Summary and Reasons for Recommendations**
- 1.1 The Borough Council needs to respond to the Boundary Committee's consultation on options for reorganising local government in Suffolk by the deadline of 26 September 2008. Since publication of the Committee's proposals in July, the Cabinet and Councillors' Reference Group have been fully involved in the process to develop the financial workbooks and the Council's own response to the Committee.
- 1.2 In the original timetable for approving the Council's submission it had been hoped to bring a draft to the Cabinet at this meeting prior to consideration of the final document by full Council on 23 September 2008. At that time, the Council was intending to prepare its own response and this timetable would have been possible. Subsequently, however, St Edmundsbury has been working with Waveney and Forest Heath District Councils to promote an alternative model to those put forward by the Boundary Committee, namely three new unitary councils to cover the areas of East Suffolk (including Lowestoft), West Suffolk and the Committee's own proposal for Ipswich/Felixstowe ('North Haven'). This alternative model will be set out in a joint submission from the three councils.
- 1.3 The joint submission is being developed with the assistance of consultants who specialise in Local Government Review. Given the tight timetable, the complexity of the work and the need for a robust and well evidenced case, the Council has been advised in the last few days that it will not be possible to sign-off the joint document until 24 September 2008. This means, therefore, that it will unfortunately not now be possible to bring the document **in full** to Cabinet or full Council.
- 1.4 Notwithstanding this, the Cabinet still wishes the Council's approach to responding to the Boundary Committee to be debated by all members at full Council. Therefore, it is proposed that a **summary** of the main elements of the likely submission will be presented to full Council on 23 September 2008, allowing a debate on the principles and the chance to feed into the final sign-off with partners on 24 September 2008. It will also be proposed that approval of the final submission be delegated to the Acting Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, and taking into account the views expressed at full Council. The Council will also be able to consider the content of the Borough Council's covering letter to the joint submission. It is expected that a similar approach will be taken by Waveney and Forest Heath District Councils.
- 1.5 To allow as much detail as possible, this summary will need to be sent out after distribution of the Council Summons for 23 September 2008, hopefully on Friday 19 September 2008.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Cabinet is asked to note the revised situation, and is **RECOMMENDED** to approve that the Borough Council's approach to responding to the Boundary Committee's consultation on options for local government reorganisation in Suffolk be considered by full Council on 23 September 2008 on the basis outlined above.

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