

# Ipswich Borough Council Response to Boundary Committee Questions

## OVERARCHING QUESTIONS:

**1. Why would your proposed model best address the social and economic challenges of the Suffolk county area? In particular, please consider the following issues:**

- The social and economic challenges of the Ipswich urban area
- Neighbourhood arrangements in Ipswich
- The specific challenges faced by Felixstowe and in particular Lowestoft
- Neighbourhood arrangements in Felixstowe and Lowestoft
- The challenges of coastal erosion and flooding in the coastal areas of the county

Our submission argues that our proposed model best serves the different economic sub-regions in Suffolk and the differing needs and challenges of the urban, rural and coastal parts of the county. We believe this creates 3 or 4 authorities based upon natural communities.

We have outlined in Sections 2 and 3 of our submission the social and economic challenges faced in the urban Ipswich area and consider that having one unitary council within the model that has a strong urban Ipswich focus is the best way of providing leadership, local empowerment and tailored services to successfully address those challenges.

We have put forward specific proposals in Section 6 of our submission for neighbourhood arrangements that build on IBC's current model of 5 Area Forums and Area Committees with aligned Safer Neighbourhood Teams underpinned by a multi-agency steering group. We intend to continue with the successful practices of area profiling and the identification of and response to local needs and issues through hot-spotting.

Felixstowe and Lowestoft share the social and environmental issues of coastal towns. Economically, Lowestoft is a regeneration area whereas Felixstowe is dominated by the port which is set to grow by some 50%. Their respective issues are addressed in our model by unitary councils designed around natural places within Suffolk that can deliver local solutions but do not preclude cooperation with their equivalents elsewhere in the region to share good practice and common approaches. [Identify anything from the Haven gateway sub-option].

We would envisage Felixstowe's existing and Lowestoft's new town councils as being the vehicle for developing local neighbourhood arrangements with equivalent powers and delegations as in Area Forums and Committees. The extent to which the towns are further subdivided e.g around existing wards to reflect the diversity of local needs will be the subject of further discussion with the respective Town Councils.

Coastal erosion and flooding will be handled differently under our three sub-options. Under, Option 1 it will become the sole responsibility of the East Suffolk Unitary, under Option 2 it will be shared between East Suffolk and Great Yarmouth and Waveney and under Option 3 it will be a combination of predominantly East Suffolk and the Northern Haven Gateway. Option 1 will provide for a single point of responsibility and integration with emergency planning services. For the other two options, coastal management will be delivered through close co-operation and joined-up delivery between the responsible authorities and will be a clear candidate for a partnership or shared service approach.

**2. What specifically are the risks of a unitary authority with a large geographical area and population and how well does your concept address these risks?**

We do not believe our proposed model puts in place any authority that could be considered to be too large. They are each designed to have the optimal balance of scale and place shaping. A large authority such as that proposed

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under One Suffolk would, in our view, result in a remote council with no coherent sense of place and great difficulty in providing leadership for the wide variety of locations and communities found within it.

As has happened in Suffolk, we would expect to see costly and inefficient delivery sub-structures created to attempt to deal with these issues. Services can become 'one size fits all' rather than be tailored to meet local needs. It will prove extremely difficult to manage a range of very different competing priorities across a wide area. In order to attempt to mitigate this, the One Suffolk option proposed by SCC and MSDC effectively recreates three-tier government.

A single body of councillors would have difficulty in effectively dealing with each other and with officers on the broad spectrum of issues facing a large and diverse geographic area. Clarity of direction and agreement on action and priorities will be problematic. Setting up locally empowered committees with sufficient clout in their areas would effectively be two-tier government by another name.

### **3. Conversely, how can smaller unitaries ensure they have the capacity and 'critical' mass to deliver affordable services, whilst retaining a strategic approach to issues across the county?**

The authorities proposed in our model are above the average size for unitary authorities and bear comparison with existing unitaries, either rural (Shropshire, Medway, Central Bedfordshire) or urban (Blackburn & Darwen and Reading).

Fit-for-purpose authorities can have a flatter structure without the overheads inherent in larger organisations. They can be more agile and adaptive with a clearer more focused set of priorities based around a coherent sense of place. Closeness to and the ability to better understand the particular needs of a local community or area will provide for cost efficient service design and delivery more likely to achieve desired outcomes. Compare this with large authorities such as proposed for one Suffolk where it is frequently necessary to create 3 or 4 service delivery areas.

Affordability can be secured through a right-sourcing approach to the delivery of services and the progressive move to a commissioning model. Right-sourcing allows for the creation of a mixed economy of service provision using the best of breed from in-house, partnership, shared service, third sector or private sector providers. Considerable savings can be achieved through the development of shared or common services with other authorities, for e.g. back-office services where there is a clear business and operational case to do so. We would consider opportunities both with other Suffolk authorities and more widely (as evidenced by the Ipswich Museums Service Partnership with Colchester). The LSP can be used to enhance cross-agency working with the Police, the PCT and Health and Social Care to provide a focus on issues such as crime reduction (the CDRP) and drug and alcohol misuse (the DAAT), to better integrate and join up services and to share infrastructure. LAAs focused on the needs of the local area can be used as a lever for more effective design and targeting of services. Our submission envisages all of these actions by building on Ipswich's successful track record in partnership working.

Where services are best delivered on a county-wide basis because of economies of scale, common requirements or coherence, e.g. waste, pension scheme management, these would remain. Such services would be identified by the unitary authorities and put in place during the implementation phase. Governance, service delivery, performance and business model arrangements would have to be agreed. Where such services already exist they can simply be migrated to the new structures.

We would also expect to consider service delivery opportunities on a wider regional basis where there is economic and service quality benefits. We would work closely with regional agencies such as Go East, EERA and EEDA in any such initiatives.

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In some cases, it may also be more effective and avoid potential duplication by putting in place county-wide governance arrangements, e.g. a single Suffolk Children's Trust, while retaining devolved and locality focused delivery arrangements. The Children and Young Persons Plan (CYPP) is due for review in 2009 and this fits in well with the timetable for unitary implementation. It is clear the Ipswich area will need its own plan focused on delivery to meet local needs. All such options will be considered.

## 4. A unitary Ipswich is envisaged under a number of proposed concepts - is it likely in your view to command a broad cross-section of support across the county?

There was significant local support for a unitary Ipswich as evidenced in Section 6 of our submission. This support will be retained with our proposed model. With extended boundaries for Ipswich and the emphasis now placed on a whole Suffolk unitary solution, we believe support both locally and more widely in the county will be further strengthened. The joint leaders' statement of support by St Edmundsbury, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils attached to our submission is testimony to this.

We would be happy to further test this support but understood this was something the Boundary Committee wished to lead on.

## 5. What would be the impact on your proposed model if:

- A Great Yarmouth / Waveney unitary authority was added
- Part of all of Waveney district was added to a unitary authority in your model
- Part or all of Waveney was removed from a unitary authority in your model and added to another authority comprising Waveney and other parts of Norfolk

The addition of a Great Yarmouth and Waveney Council would probably make the East Suffolk unitary envisaged in our sub-options 1 and 3 unviable unless the proposed East/West boundary was redrawn. The assessment of sense of place and viability would have to be revisited if this were to be the case. Our sub-option 2 already envisages the inclusion of a Great Yarmouth and Waveney authority.

## 6. How significant are the economic links between Ipswich and Felixstowe in the sub- regional economy and how would your proposed model reflect these links?

There are strong economic links between Ipswich, Felixstowe and Trimley. Both areas are key to the Haven Gateway and the effective exploitation of its growth point status. There are close trade ties between the ports of Felixstowe and Ipswich. Because of the geography of the area, most Felixstowe in- and out-bound traffic will go through the Ipswich area, including London commuters. While there is a green belt area between the two centres there are also zones earmarked for housing development and growth, creating progressively closer inter-dependency into the future. A unitary Ipswich would seek to protect that green belt in the interests of the sub-region.

There is considerable commuting between the two towns (the 2001 census shows 2,477 people travelling to work from Ipswich to Felixstowe and 2,015 from Felixstowe to Ipswich), there are numerous service sector jobs in both towns that support their respective ports, they have shared transport links both rail and road (A12/A14) and there are linked business, e.g. logistics in the business parks surrounding Ipswich. Both towns support common industry sectors such as marine, leisure, tourism and hospitality.

Ipswich is the closest shopping and cultural destination to Felixstowe and Felixstowe is an important coastal leisure destination for the people of Ipswich.

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This inter-relationship arguably has all the properties of a City-Region concept for the area.

It is important to emphasise that the Haven Gateway also creates economic links with north Essex (Harwich, Tendring and Colchester) and that Ipswich has ties with other towns in the sub-region (e.g. Colchester and Norwich as joint-sponsors of University Campus Suffolk).

Our proposed model supports these links by providing leadership in the development of the Haven Gateway Partnership, the effective targeting and delivery of the MAA and the development of coherent planning solutions for the Port-City interface. This is discussed in sections 6.36 to 6.40 of our submission. The sub-options identified all enable this leadership but vary in the span and degree of control exercised through the extent of the boundary of an expanded Ipswich.

**7. In terms of the criteria set out in the request for advice (particularly neighbourhood empowerment) what are the issues which the outer area of the proposed Ipswich unitary authority (i.e. beyond the existing city limits) would face? How could they be best addressed?**

The outer area of the Ipswich Unitary Authority will vary depending on the sub-option put forward. For all sub-options, we believe there to be strong inter-relationships with Ipswich in critical areas such as education, employment, leisure, retail, transport and housing that those communities do not have with any other part of Suffolk. Beyond the area defined for sub-option 3 those inter-relationships are increasingly intangible.

For Option 1 Expanded Urban Ipswich this will mean the addition of a number of parishes that have grown or are planned to grow in terms of population density and could be described as 'urban villages'. Increasingly, they will have ever closer social and economic links to Ipswich with the associated shared sense of place and will be requiring and consuming urban services. Current school catchment areas and associated travel and leisure patterns reinforce these links. It is, therefore, right that they have a say in the design and delivery of these services. The issues affecting these communities will increasingly become urban issues comparable to those facing Ipswich now, thus requiring common services and a single strategic leadership for the area.

Towns that are growing quite rapidly, e.g. Kesgrave, are beginning to experience some of the issues that are prevalent in existing urban areas of Ipswich. Of additional concern will be the preservation of the green belt to maintain quality of life in and around the towns. An expanded Ipswich boundary will enable us to share learning and best practice to support these growing towns to nip issues in the bud before they escalate and to better protect the green belt.

For Option 2 Urban Ipswich this involves the addition of one parish and some sub-parish tidying up to properly reflect the actual current Ipswich urban footprint. In terms of issues faced they are therefore no different to those for Ipswich but will be able to take advantage of delivery organisation and services best suited to their natural place.

Option 3 Northern Haven Gateway is the most significant expansion of Ipswich's boundary. As well as covering the areas described in Options 1 and 2 with their associated issues, the coastal and port town of Felixstowe faces challenges around transport, economic development beyond the port, affordable housing availability and local skills development. In the rest of the Felixstowe and the Shotley peninsulas there is a combination of rural and developing villages.

The rural villages face issues such as aging populations, affordable housing, public transport and the lack of facilities for young people. The issues confronting developing villages are as described in the analysis of Option 1 above. There will also be a set of coastal management issues over a limited coastline and estuary area as discussed in response to Question 1.

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Both towns and villages that are potentially part of the new authority will have specific concerns around preserving their sense of identity and retaining current levels of local democracy and accountability.

A unitary authority will have the ability and capacity to take a strategic and integrated approach to all of these issues in the local area.

In all cases, a refocused Community Strategy and local empowerment through Area Forums and Committees, together with data profiling, will enable communities to 'hotspot' issues, to determine local priorities, to contribute to the design of services appropriate to their neighbourhoods and to take advantage of delegated decision-making and budgets for local improvements. As we said in our submission we will work with existing town and parish councils to devise the best approach for their area and benefit from their current good practice.

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

### 8. **What are your views on an East Suffolk unitary authority including Ipswich? Would it be advantageous for the economic and social development of Ipswich and the rest of the Unitary Authority?**

We believe an East Suffolk Unitary including Ipswich would not provide a coherent sense of place for its very diverse communities ranging from urban Ipswich to coastal Aldeburgh and rural Framlingham.

It would be unable to provide a proper focus on the uniquely urban issues confronting Ipswich and would face considerable difficulty in both prioritising its resources and designing and delivering services to meet the diversity of needs across East Suffolk.

An East Suffolk council would in our view be unable to provide sufficient economic leadership to maximise the potential of a rapidly developing and expanding Ipswich and the NHG growth point status to the detriment of the economy of Suffolk and the wider sub-region. Its focus would inevitably be diluted by the particular needs of the rural and market town economy focused as it is on agriculture, tourism and food and drink processing.

Conversely, there would be a risk that because of its rapid growth plans and its importance to the wider sub-region Ipswich would dominate an East Suffolk authority, leading to a loss of focus on other locality issues such as the economies of the market towns.

### 9. **Leaving aside the historic east/west boundary within Suffolk, can you expand on the justification for this split?**

Our proposed model of East, West and Ipswich is not predicated on the historical East/West split but on the basis of recognising the differing sense of place and social and economic factors in each area.

Both have market towns but the West has a clear economic pull towards Cambridge whereas the East revolves around Felixstowe and its port and Lowestoft's regeneration area. Housing, jobs and infrastructure are correspondingly aligned. The two economies also have a different sectoral focus.

The East has coastal issues and the West must deal with rapid house and economic growth.

The choice of boundary along the line of the A140 represents the best geographic division between the two areas and creates, with an expanded Ipswich, viable authorities in terms of population that are able to play a strategic role in the county but can also focus on their respective local issues.

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## 10. Can you provide more detailed information on the boundary of Ipswich under your proposed concept?

Sub-Option 1 Expanded Urban Ipswich adds the town of Kesgrave and the parishes of Nacton, Purdis Farm, Foxhall, Rushmere St Andrew, Claydon, Barham, Great Blakenham, Little Blakenham, Bramford, Sproughton, Pinewood, Belstead and Wherstead to the existing boundary

Sub-Option 2 Urban Ipswich adds the parish of Pinewood together with some sub-parish tidying up on the East and West to reflect the natural urban settlement pattern of Ipswich.

Sub-Option 3 Northern Haven Gateway is as per Option 1 plus all parishes within the Felixstowe and Shotley peninsulas and extends to the A12 in the West.

All three options provide a clear urban focus but have a differing combination of benefits as discussed in our original analysis. IBC have put forward these options without undertaking extensive consultation and are very keen to hear the views of stakeholders.

We recognise that the size and shape of the Ipswich based authority is pivotal to the design of a model for the whole of Suffolk and have been deliberately flexible over the precise boundary of an expanded Ipswich in order to enhance the prospect of finding the optimal solution for the county.

## 11. How large, geographically, would Ipswich need to be before an East Suffolk unitary authority would become unviable?

We consider the maximum size for an Ipswich Unitary Authority to obtain the benefit of economies of scale and influence while retaining a sense of place would be our proposed sub-option 3. This allows for a viable East Suffolk unitary provided the preferred solution does not include a Great Yarmouth and whole of Waveney authority. Within the proposed model, the exact location of the boundary for East and West unitaries is as important as getting the boundary for Ipswich right.

The fundamental issue for the viability of any unitary is the sense of place and the focus provided for its communities rather than just scale or geographic size.

## 12. Is there a reason why Woodbridge is not included in an enlarged Ipswich unitary authority?

We do not believe Woodbridge should be part of an expanded Ipswich authority on the grounds that it is a market town with social and economic and a sense of place issues more closely aligned with a predominantly rural authority than one with an urban core. Our sense is that Woodbridge's focus is more towards the rural hinterland than urban Ipswich. It is self-contained and more naturally looks away from Ipswich to the coast and the north of the county.

There is a strong contrast with, for example, Felixstowe that has a set of challenges and associations more compatible with Ipswich. This illustrates the level of thought we have put into designing the sub-options - we have not just gone for a 'land grab'.

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## BROAD CROSS-SECTION OF SUPPORT

### 13. Who at this stage supports an East/West/Expanded Ipswich unitary authorities?

Our submission sets out our view of the support for an expanded unitary Ipswich and the various sub-options (section 6.8 - 6.10 and Appendices A - C). We are confident the proposal would receive support from the business community, the education sector and voluntary organisations.

We have not consulted on our complete proposed model for Suffolk as we understood the Boundary Committee intended to act as the primary conduit for consultation. We would be delighted to assist the Committee or to undertake targeted discussions with partners and stakeholders if that would be helpful.

### 14. What support is there at present from Parish/Town Councils?

In the same vein as our response to Question 13, we have not to date actively formally consulted with affected Parish or Town Councils so are unable to represent their views. Along with other authorities in Suffolk we presented our proposals to SALC on 30 April and responded to their questions.

We would be delighted to assist the Committee or to undertake targeted discussions with parish and town councils if that would be helpful.

## STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

### 15. What would be the impact of your preferred model of unitary local government on key existing partners?

Under our unitary model of four-yearly elections with strong Leader and Cabinet control, the council acts as a community leader and convenor of public service provision in the local area. As such, it is essential that we work with and help shape and support the delivery decisions of other public service providers and maximise the opportunities for joined-up working and the sharing of infrastructure and resources.

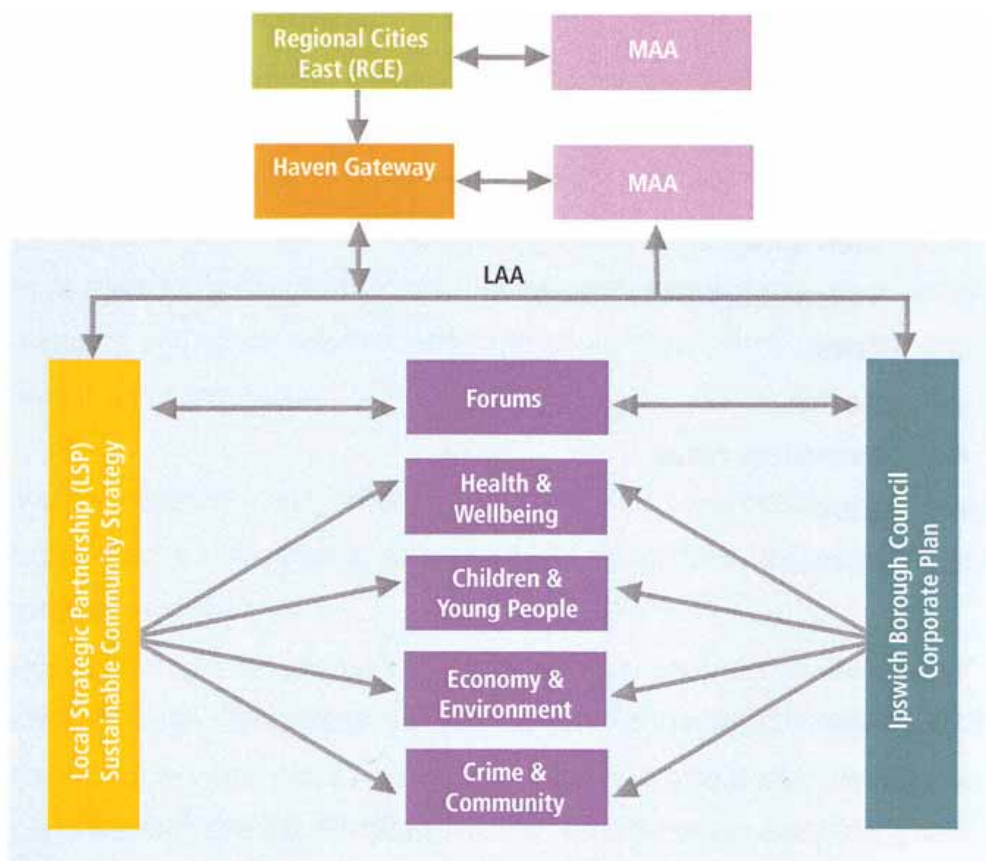
In terms of an expanded Ipswich, our key partners are the LSP, the Police, the PCT, the Mental Health Trust, Ipswich Hospital, schools, the voluntary and community sector and the business sector. The Haven Gateway Partnership and Regional Cities East are dealt with in the response to the next question.

Overall, our approach can be described as having a strong outcome focus, reducing the number of forums, removing duplication and working together smarter.

With the LSP (one Ipswich), we will continue, refresh and reinvigorate the current successful cross agency partnership arrangements. The partnership will be responsible for undertaking needs assessments, collating information and overall strategy. We envisage the LSP progressively evolving towards operating as a Public Service Board. We will update the Sustainable Community Strategy to properly reflect the different needs of an expanded Ipswich. The degree of change will be determined by the chosen boundary of the new authority however for each option we will have a far stronger delivery focus in a unitary environment. LAAs, focused on the needs of the local area, will be used as a lever for effective design, integration and targeting of services. Relevant portfolio-holders will chair block boards to ensure there is strong leadership. Our proposed MAA/LAA delivery arrangements are described in figure 1 below

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## PROPOSED MAA/LAA ARRANGEMENTS



Ipswich is within the Eastern Area Basic Command Unit for Suffolk Constabulary, in recognition of the particular demands of the area, it has own Community Safety Partnership and its own Police District. This consists of 5 Safer Neighbourhood Teams who are coterminous with our Area Forums each operating as one seamless body. With Ipswich recording 38% of the crime in Suffolk the effective working of this partnership is vital. We would anticipate providing a common and integrated approach to the expanded Ipswich area by extending these arrangements in consultation with parish and town councils on the basis of existing localities and using current good practice and local arrangements. Unlike the situation now, a unitary Ipswich will have councillors on the Police Authority able to contribute to the debate on how the area is policed.

A unitary Ipswich council will work closely with the Suffolk PCT to develop locality arrangements to ensure that the health needs of people in the expanded Ipswich area are met. The council would like to have its portfolio-holder for Adult Service, Health and Wellbeing along with the Director co-opted onto the PCT Board. We believe it would be beneficial to establish a joint commissioning team together with a joint post of Director of Public Health. Where possible and appropriate we will continue to participate in Suffolk wide work and initiatives.

The council will also look for opportunities for partnership working, data and intelligence sharing and the development of integrated services and shared infrastructure with the Ipswich Hospital Trust, NHS Acute Mental health Trust, the Ambulance Trust, community health services and GPs.

There is a vibrant third sector with a broad spectrum of 400 charities and more than 600 community groups in the Ipswich area. The third sector already run much of the Supporting People programme, the majority of hostels and supported housing schemes, day care centres, together with the provision of advice and advocacy. Many are already actively involved with the council in determining and developing service provision through e.g the Hostels Liaison Group, the Homeless Strategy Panel and the Mental Health Allocations Panel. The new council will continue to rely

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upon this expertise in designing and delivering sensitive services to often vulnerable people across the wider area and with a broader range of services. This will create further opportunities for better joining up and improved harnessing of this capability for the benefit of the community.

Schools have a number of partnerships within and across authority boundaries (e.g. SWISS). We would expect to continue this partnership working and will work with schools to improve educational attainment and to identify, share and implement best practice. All three sub-options have a strong correlation with existing school pyramids and clusters and retain the primary/secondary school model for their areas so will not be subject to the hiatus encountered elsewhere in the county.

On the broader educational and skills front, a unitary Ipswich will continue to work closely with both University Campus Suffolk (UCS) and Suffolk New College to help develop the local skills required to meet the demands created by economic development in the region. As an example, we already collaborate with UCS on the development of public sector management courses.

We will also continue to actively foster our partnership to deliver the growth agenda with the business sector and major local employers like BT and the port in areas such as housing, the port, shipping, insurance, logistics and ICT.

In all of these areas we would look to work with other authorities both to share best practice and to collaborate where this would be beneficial in response to a particular issue or initiative.

## 16. How do you envisage your economic relationship continuing with the Haven Gateway Partnership?

Our submission sections 6.36 to 6.40 sets out our view of forward engagement within the Haven Gateway Partnership (HGP) and Regional Cities East (RCE).

Our ambition to be a regional centre means developing employment, leisure, retail, education and other opportunities for our catchment area - which includes sizeable parts of Suffolk and North Essex. Infrastructure planning is vital in enabling this so the Ipswich unitary authority will be working closely with the HGP and RCE. The growth of Ipswich is inextricably linked to that of the Haven Gateway sub-region as well as the wider East of England region.

A unitary Ipswich will continue to work closely with these partners and adjoining authorities to address strategic transport, planning and economic development activities. Unitary status will better enable the council to play a leadership role in the Haven gateway policy development and growth agenda and to meet Government targets for the region. We will have more capacity and clout to tackle these issues. For example, on transport, where the current strategy for Ipswich is some 15 years old and the Ipswich and surrounding area faces serious transport issues and under-investment, we would make addressing this a priority within a sub-regional context embracing the needs of Suffolk and Haven Gateway residents and businesses.

The East of England Plan identifies the Haven Gateway as one of four areas in the region for which the "coherence and particular nature of the issues and responses justifies sub-area treatment". The plan goes on to recognise that the Haven Gateway "includes the key areas for change in Ipswich and Colchester and has the potential to develop further as a major focus for economic development and growth".

As an "engine of growth" the Haven Gateway will implement an Integrated Development Programme to support the continued economic development of the area. This will involve coordinating the provision of 65,000 additional homes and 50,000 net additional jobs. As a consequence the existing economic relationship between Ipswich, Colchester, and the key Haven Ports within the Haven Gateway will be strengthened significantly.

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A number of spatial packages have been defined to implement infrastructure provision to enable this development, and clearly a fully integrated approach within the sub-region will be critical to achieving these challenging targets.

Common issues that are required to be addressed include:

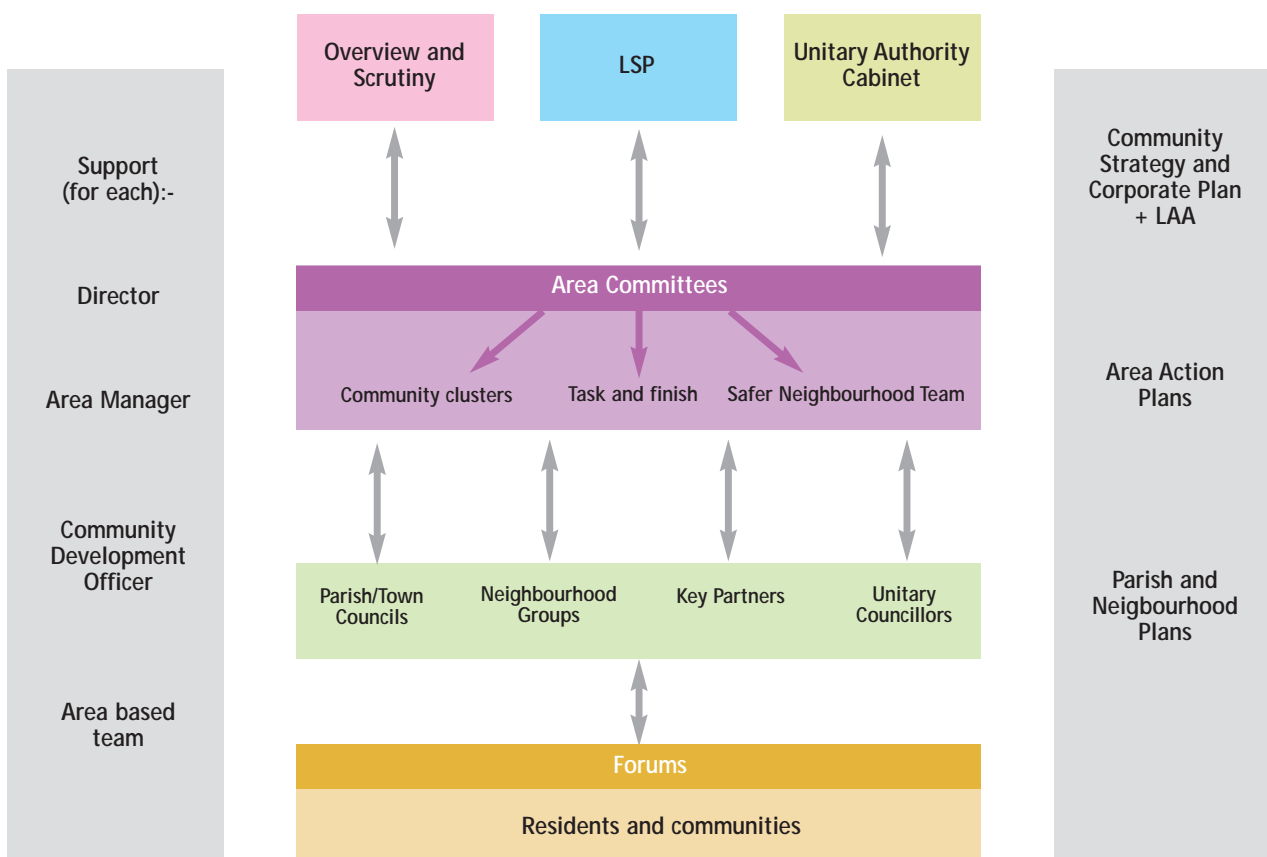
- strengthening the knowledge economy and nurture higher value-added activities so that economic growth is not just focussed on low wage/low skill activities;
- raising skill levels across the Haven Gateway - extending the provision of HE/FE is a key factor for this;
- enhancing enterprise/entrepreneurship, and increase supply of premises for business start-ups and business incubator facilities;
- improving the quality of employment land available for development. High quality sites need to be identified and safeguarded; and
- harnessing and enhancing existing strong knowledge based assets, especially in the creative industries, in ICT, and in environmental technologies.

These are examples of how Ipswich shares a particular set of economic challenges, which need to be worked on and solved within the Haven Gateway context. The continuing economic relationship with Haven Gateway will therefore become significantly stronger and more important as all constituent authorities and agencies work to address such problems and succeed in achieving the growth opportunities for the Sub-region.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD EMPOWERMENT

Sections 6.41 to 6.46 of our submission set out our proposed approach to neighbourhood empowerment and engagement. The following diagram provides a structural depiction of the approach.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD EMPOWERMENT



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## 17. Can you clarify exactly how decision-making will be devolved?

Within our proposed structure, decision-making will be devolved to Area Committees and the equivalent bodies in the new towns and parishes within an Ipswich unitary (see sections 6.45 and 6.46). The precise areas of delegation and the level of devolved budgets will be determined as part of the design and implementation of the new authority and be approved and reviewed by the Cabinet and full Council.

We would envisage devolution via a number of mechanisms:

- Where appropriate, an enhanced role for town and parish councils building on current neighbourhood management through Area Committees;
- Service specific arrangements such as Management Boards for Parks and Housing and potentially Education Services and Culture, with customer and councillor representation able directly to influence access to and the quality and responsiveness of those services;
- Neighbourhood budgets for Councillors, discussed later in response to question 21 below;
- The creation of improvement areas such as the Business Improvement District approach with business ratepayers taking control of the strategic and service delivery decisions with associated funding. Ipswich town centre (Ipswich Central) is the first example of this; and
- Arrangements for targeting specific groups such as our proposal to set up a Youth Council with a devolved budget in order to capture the opinions and secure involvement of young people in decision making.

Area Committees will themselves be empowered to:

- Analyse local needs and wants;
- Commission work through task and finish groups;
- Prepare action plans, e.g. to address cleaner, safer, greener issues in the area [refer to Triangle plan as an example];
- Scrutinise performance and the impact of plans;
- Use devolved powers to make decisions about service delivery within a set budget;
- Develop a neighbourhood engagement plan.

They will be supported by: a Director, an area manager, a community development officer and an area team. The Area Committee chair will represent their community on the main LSP Board to act as an advocate and to ensure that local issues are fully represented in LSP planning, target setting and resource allocation.

## 18. Can you give further detail on the role to be played by Parishes and Town Councils?

This will be a new council and existing parish and town councils will have a major input to its design and implementation. We will discuss with them the degree of delegation they would like. We are committed to helping build local capacity and capability to enable parish and town councils assume the optimal level of responsibility and delegation.

They will form the foundation of an expanded Area Forum and Committee structure in the wider Ipswich area as per the diagram above. We will consult fully with these councils to discuss their current powers and how these can be developed further and integrated into our overall model. We also aim to learn from their experiences and good practice and feed this into the evolution of our Area Committee structures and operation.

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## 19. Can you explain the level to which planning decisions will be delegated?

Ipswich currently has an excellent planning service that will provide the professional foundation for the new authority.

We have a clear commitment to planning at parish and town level. This fits extremely well with the area planning arrangements set out in response to question 17.

We believe current town planning processes can be used as a model of best practice in developing the governance and delegation arrangements for Area Committees. We will enter into early discussions with towns on this approach. Delegations will be on the basis of a framework for decision-making that will include conformance to a number of key policy principles and consistency with the Local Development Plan.

## 20. How do you envisage neighbourhood empowerment in areas outside the immediate urban Ipswich boundary?

We see empowerment operating in a consistent fashion across all areas within the Ipswich boundary although we strongly believe one size does not fit all, particularly when engaging and empowering communities. This means that where existing structures are in place we will build on them, e.g. town planning arrangements and the Ipswich Housing Management Board.

Our Area Forums provide a platform for local empowerment to give people a better say and where these are not in place in the wider Ipswich area we will work with town and parish Councils to either set them up or to use or adapt existing structures for the purpose.

## 21. Can you explain how 'neighbourhood' budgets/locality budgets will be administered?

We currently have no fixed view on local administration of budgets and intend to learn and adapt best practice from elsewhere.

Under Area Committee arrangements, Councillors will be given locality budgets (split 50:50 between capital and revenue) for use in the development and delivery of their Community Area Action Plans. Councillors might elect to combine locality budgets in order to address specific issues. Action plans and their associated resources will require approval by the council's Cabinet.

As a further example, a Suffolk-wide Voluntary Sector Funding Management Group has asked the one-ipswich LSP to pilot a 'community chest' model (worth £125,000) to devolve funding to local communities to develop community led projects and initiatives that promote:

- community empowerment, engagement and involvement;
- promote well being
- increase volunteering and community participation.

We will feed this and other experiences into our thinking on this matter.

## 22. On what boundaries would Area Committees/Assemblies be drawn and how will the make up of Area Committees/Assemblies be decided?

This would be a matter for local consultation, deliberation and decision-making as part of the process for implementing neighbourhood arrangements in the new authority.

# Ipswich Borough Council Response to Boundary Committee Questions

Our 5 existing Area Committee boundaries are likely to be retained but could be expanded to include some new areas where they are extremely close to the current Borough boundary and where there are common issues and shared delivery infrastructure. We will continue to review and consult on boundaries as the population and demographics of the area change. Our current work in determining how best to handle the emerging community on the Ipswich Waterfront demonstrates this approach.

For the other areas beyond the current boundary we would expect to use existing boundaries as the basis for the creation of additional Area Committees unless there are evident sense of place or demographic reasons for reconsidering them. Equally, existing town or parish Councils might wish to disaggregate to better reflect the mix of issues in their area or to merge to provide greater scale, flexibility and opportunity.

We will consult with local communities and their representatives on the size and shape of the new Area Committees. They will clearly need to make sense in terms of geography, community and shared issues and be of sufficient scale to be able to create and implement action plans that have a real impact on the area.

We have, however, learned that not all key issues can be solved at area level but will sometimes require a more tailored local approach with individual action plans for smaller communities as for the Town and Bridge and Triangle projects within the current South-West Ipswich Area.

## **23 What resources will be available to those Quality Parish Councils who might be taking on management of services?**

We would consider parish council requests for delegation and/or funding on a case-by-case basis. We see the QPC as evidence of organisational maturity and capability to take on service delivery roles. As set out in the response to Question 18, we believe the new authority will have a role in capacity building. This could include working with SALC on a Suffolk-wide basis.

Where there is local support and a clear business and operational justification for allocation of resources we would consult with the local community to gather their views on the options available.

We have experience of operating in this fashion with e.g. Parks and Housing Management Boards.

## **VALUE FOR MONEY SERVICES**

## **24 Can you elaborate on how shared services between the newly created unitary authorities might work under the proposed concept?**

As part of the service design phase for the new authority we propose to carry out 'make or buy' evaluations for every front-line and back-office service in line with the right-sourcing and mixed economy strategy set out in our submission. The evaluation of a shared service option will look at factors such as VFM potential, commonality of requirement, current performance levels, compatibility of infrastructure and complexity and risk of implementation.

We would anticipate undertaking these exercises in conjunction with the other new authorities in order to put in place the optimal mix of sole and joint service provision across Suffolk. We will also be looking to other authorities, e.g. in Regional Cities East, which might have a better match to our requirements for some services (as evidenced by our Museums Service Partnership with Colchester).

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We will minimise the overall transition risks by prioritising those services where a shared service solution will be adopted (e.g. by concentrating on quick wins and where early transformation work is essential for longer term benefit) and by assessing organisational capability and capacity to manage the resultant level of change.

For each service we agree should be delivered by a shared service we will jointly agree governance, service delivery, service location, performance, business model and charging arrangements together with transition and implementation plans. These will be put in place either during the implementation phase for the new authorities or be migrated to at a later date.

## **25. How would the business models for the unitary authorities incorporate county council services?**

For county council services we will apply the 'make or buy' decision process identified above. As has been previously stated, many county council services, e.g. education are already delivered using 3 area structures.

We will additionally be considering those services that can be more efficiently and effectively delivered through integration with existing district services, e.g. Housing and Adult Social Care, Environmental Protection and Trading Standards, Children's Services and Culture, Sport and Leisure and Transport and Land Use Planning.

We have given some initial thought to service design and transition issues. These are attached at Appendix A. Clearly we will need to revisit and refresh this work in the light of the Boundary Committee's preferred option.

Between the three authorities we will agree those services that are best delivered on a county-wide basis because of economies of scale, common requirements or coherence, e.g. waste, pension scheme management. As has been mentioned earlier, we would also look to options on a broader regional basis. These would be identified during service design and put in place during the implementation phase. Governance, service delivery, performance and business model arrangements would have to be agreed. Where such services already exist they can simply be migrated to new delivery structures