

Fit for the future

Concepts for Unitary Ipswich and Suffolk

Submission to the Boundary Committee by Ipswich Borough Council

April 2008



Foreword

We fully endorse the principle of introducing unitary government across Suffolk.

The concept put forward in this document represents our view of how an Ipswich Unitary Authority with extended boundaries could operate as one component of unitary local government for Suffolk.

Our concept creates a number of viable new authorities designed for the future that would best meet the varying needs of the people of Suffolk. We believe that together these meet the requirements of the Key Lines of Enquiry in full.

Within our concept we have proposed a number of sub-options that offer a differing mix of benefits for further consideration by the Boundary Committee. These essentially balance greater economies of scale and economic development against an enhanced focus on urban issues and communities.

We look forward to further developing these sub-options within our overarching concept and continuing to work with the Boundary Committee and Suffolk authorities in designing and implementing the optimal solution for Suffolk.



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Leader of Ipswich Borough Council
and Leader of the Conservative Group*



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1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out IBC's proposed concept of how an Ipswich unitary authority with extended boundaries would operate within a pattern of unitary government across the whole of Suffolk. It examines a number of potentially viable sub-options for the Ipswich area and considers them in relation to the other unitary concepts for Suffolk and Norfolk.

1.2 The document is arranged as follows:

- Section 2 describes Suffolk and the communities within it;
- Section 3 discusses the role of Ipswich in Suffolk and the wider region;
- Section 4 sets out the challenges faced by local government;
- Section 5 presents the Ipswich concept;
- Section 6 demonstrates how the concept meets the Key Lines of Enquiry; and
- Section 7 outlines a number of sub-options for implementing the Ipswich concept and their relationship to unitary arrangements across Suffolk.

1.3 This submission is supported by all political groups on the Borough Council and was formally endorsed at a meeting of its Executive on 8 April 2008.

2. The Suffolk Context

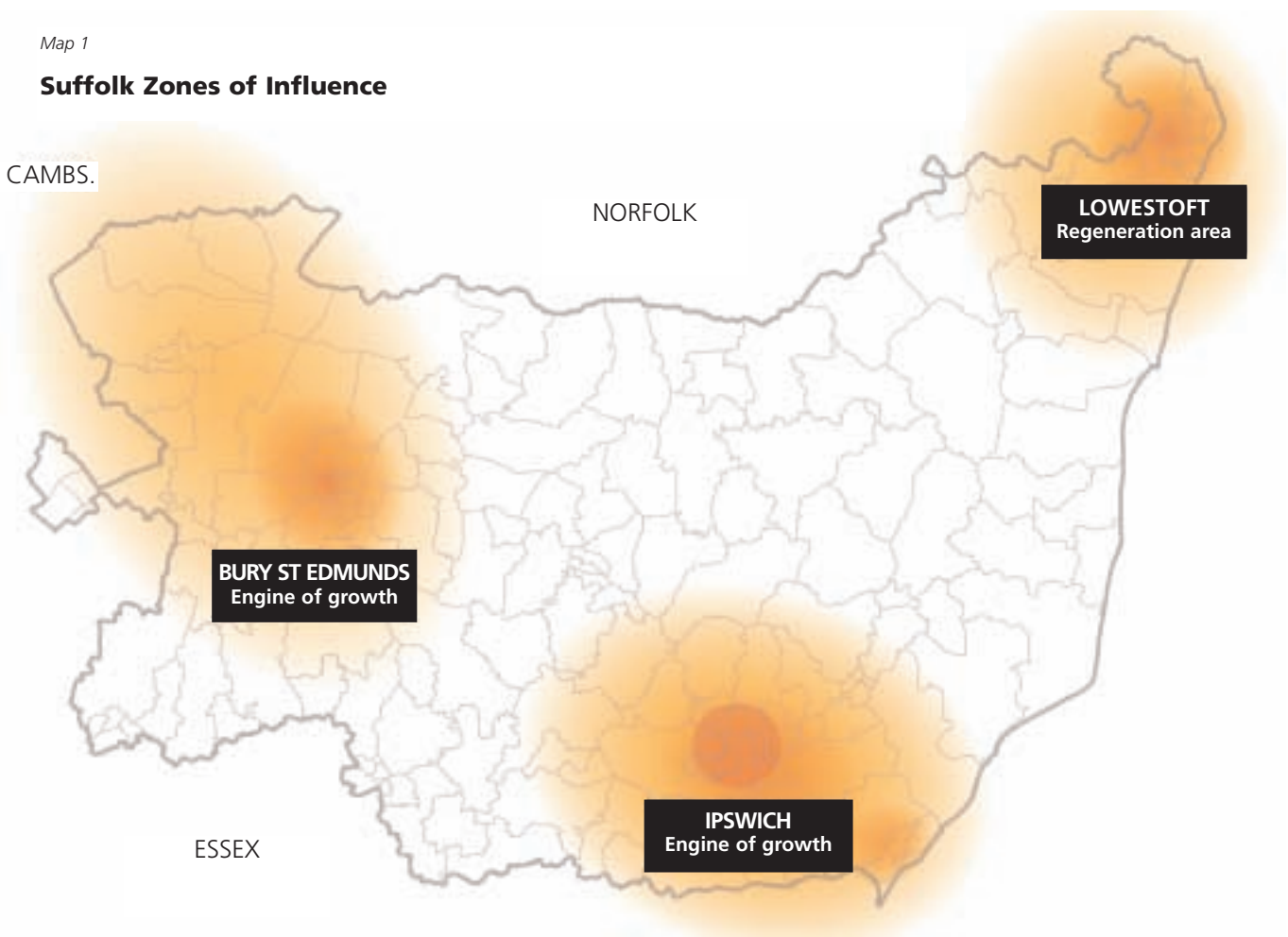
2.1 The county of Suffolk is geographically very large. For example, to travel the 45 miles from Ipswich to Haverhill or Lowestoft takes well over an hour by car and much longer by public transport. According to the revised mid 2005 estimates, its total population is 696,000.

2.2 Suffolk has three distinct centres of population which are spread across the county. These are shown in *Map 1* below.:

- **Ipswich - a growth area with 20000 houses to be built by 2020**
- **Lowestoft - a coastal regeneration area**
- **Bury St Edmunds - a development area drawn towards Cambridge**

Map 1

Suffolk Zones of Influence



2. The Suffolk Context

2.3 The Suffolk Development Agency (SDA) considers that the economy of Suffolk comprises a number of sub-regions:

- The economy of Ipswich and the wider Haven Gateway covers the economic sub-region of south and east Suffolk and north Essex. The Haven ports of Felixstowe, Harwich and Ipswich comprise a major international gateway and have growth point status. Felixstowe port is the largest in the UK and is set to grow by 50%. Ipswich is by far the largest urban centre in the county and is a major player in the Haven Gateway Partnership. It has significant business activities such as insurance, ICT, shipping and logistics and manufacturing and is the base for regional and county-wide organisations such as the County Council, the Learning and Skills Council, the Chamber of Commerce, the PCT and HM Revenue and Customs. There have been some high profile large company closures in recent years but overall employment continues to rise. Ipswich is buoyant and substantial new developments are under way or planned linked especially to the renaissance of the Waterfront - the largest regeneration scheme in the East of England. Just outside Ipswich is Adastral Park, a BT research centre with a diverse range of associated companies and around 4500 employees that is recognised as one of the leading centres of technological innovation in the communications industry.
- Lowestoft (with Great Yarmouth) - spanning the Norfolk-Suffolk border - constitutes a second distinctive sub-region. The area has a traditional economic structure and one that is characterised by high levels of dependence on sectors undergoing restructuring, energy, some port-related activity and traditional seaside tourism. Levels of entrepreneurship within the sub-region are low and the area as a whole is characterised by low wage levels, relatively high unemployment and little new business investment, all of which is exacerbated by a poor physical infrastructure. Within the sub-region, there are important opportunities for the future, and the renewable sector holds particular potential.
- Suffolk's rural areas and market towns face a distinctive set of challenges and opportunities. These relate to the economic structure (and the continuing importance of food and drink processing, agriculture and some traditional engineering activities), major and intensifying issues relating to access, and a series of issues, which are typical of rural areas throughout England. Of particular note is the continuing growth in second homes.

2. The Suffolk Context

- A further sub-region encompasses parts of West Suffolk (notably Bury St Edmunds, Haverhill and Newmarket) and is linked into the economy of Cambridge and the M11 Corridor.

2.4 Ipswich and the rest of Suffolk have contrasting rural and urban elements that present different challenges. The following factors demonstrate this:

Figure 1.

Diversity

	<i>Percentage of population in all minority groups at 2001</i>	<i>Percentage of population in non-white ethnic minority groups at 2001</i>
Ipswich	9.10%	6.60%
Suffolk (without Ipswich)	4.93%	1.60%
National	13.00%	9.70%

Source: Table KS06, Office of National Statistics

Figure 2.

Deprivation

<i>Area</i>	<i>Rank of average score of deprivation</i>	<i>No of people living in each hectare</i>
Babergh	277	1.4
Forest Heath	265	1.7
IPSWICH	99	30.4
Suffolk Coastal	274	1.4
Mid Suffolk	306	1.1
Waveney	114	3.2
St Edmundsbury	260	1.5

Source: [cipfa stats.net/uploads/Finance & General 2007/08](http://cipfa.stats.net/uploads/Finance%20&%20General%202007/08)

2. The Suffolk Context

Figure 3.

Educational Attainment

Area	% of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE grade A* - C
Babergh	54.2
Forest Heath	40.5
Ipswich - East	60.1
Ipswich - other	28.6
Ipswich - overall	40.6
Suffolk Coastal	52.8
Mid Suffolk	55.7
Waveney	38.0
St Edmundsbury	52.4
England	46.8

Source: dfes secondary school achievement & attainment tables 2007

Figure 4.

Teenage Conception Rates

Area	Conception rates 2002-2004 Rate / 1000 girls
Babergh	25.1
Forest Heath	29.1
IPSWICH	49.3
Suffolk Coastal	23.3
Mid Suffolk	26.6
Waveney	44.1
St Edmundsbury	27.0
England	41.6

Source: Suffolk Observatory

2. The Suffolk Context

Figure 5.

Crime Rates

Community Safety BVPIs 2006/07 results compared with District Councils			
<i>BVPI</i>	<i>Quartile</i>	<i>% Rank against District Councils</i>	<i>% Comparison against 2005/06 performance</i>
126 - Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households	Bottom quartile	18.6%	11%
127a - Violent crime per 1,000 population	Bottom quartile	8%	7%
127b - Robberies per 1,000 population	Bottom quartile	9%	10%
128 - Number of vehicle crimes per 1,000 population	Bottom quartile	6%	17%

Source: IBC Quartile Book & Audit Commission

■ Ipswich has 38% of the crime in Suffolk and has crime levels more comparable to Sunderland than to a rural county

Figure 6.

Infant Mortality Rates

<i>Area</i>	<i>Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 births</i>
Central Suffolk PCT	1.0
IPSWICH	6.8
Suffolk Coastal	2.2
Suffolk West	5.1
Waveney	3.2
NSC (Norfolk, Suffolk & Cambridgeshire)	4.9
England	5.3

2. The Suffolk Context

Figure 7.

Standard Mortality Ratio

The Standard Mortality Ratio (SMR) for various wards in Ipswich illustrates the stark difference in life expectancy at the higher and lower ends of the range (2001-2005)

Ward	Number of deaths	SMR
Westgate	129	155
Bridge	135	151
Gipping	157	151
Alexandra	113	142
Priory Heath	99	121
Suffolk (benchmark)		90
Bixley	88	67
St Margarets	88	86
Rushmere	115	105
England	n/a	100
Ipswich	n/a	111

Source: Suffolk Observatory & SHA Health Atlas 2006

2.5 Compared to the rest of Suffolk Ipswich has:

- More lone parents;
- More children and young people under the age of 24;
- Fewer people older than 65;
- More looked after children; and
- More free schools meals entitlement.

2. The Suffolk Context

2.6 The geographical, social and economic differences mean that inevitably strategic leadership, community engagement and service delivery happen at a sub-county level. This means that Suffolk currently has:

- 7 District Councils;
- 3 Suffolk County Council service delivery areas for CYP, ACS services and Highways services;
- 2 police Basic Command Unit areas;
- 2 PCTs

2.7 Unitary councils across the whole of Suffolk will streamline the delivery of public services, create sustainable growth, tackle both rural and urban issues and meet the specific needs of all of its various localities and communities.

3. Ipswich - place-shaping within Suffolk and the wider region

3.1 Ipswich is the fastest growing urban centre in the East of England and is established as being one of the 40 largest settlements in the state of the English Cities report. It has achieved Growth Point Status and forms part of the Haven Gateway, one of only four official sub-regions in the East of England. Ipswich is therefore a strong driver of growth and development providing an economic pull to the rest of Suffolk and north Essex in particular.

3.2 Ipswich chairs the Regional Cities East (RCE) group who together and with respective partners act as drivers of economic growth and sustainable development in the region and work to raise its national and international profile. The RCE comprises of Peterborough, Luton, Ipswich, Norwich, Colchester and Southend. Working with our partners in RCE we will deliver 45% of the total growth in the East of England. Ipswich finds that its ambitions are heavily compromised by not having a unitary council as in the case of RCE partners - Southend, Luton and Peterborough.

Figure 8.

Population growth	
Percentage change in population 2001 -2021	
Suffolk	9.5%
Ipswich	18.2%

3.3 The pace of change is accelerating. Ipswich is a key area for growth as identified in the East of England Spatial Strategy with one of the highest housing targets in the region of approximately 700-800 homes annually through to 2021. In fact current levels are already at 1100 - 1200 per annum. Ipswich is only a one hour train journey from the City of London and there is a rapid growth in the numbers of commuters. In addition there is a target to create 30,000 new jobs, the majority of which are in Ipswich with the rest in the neighbouring Babergh, Mid Suffolk and Suffolk Coastal district council areas.

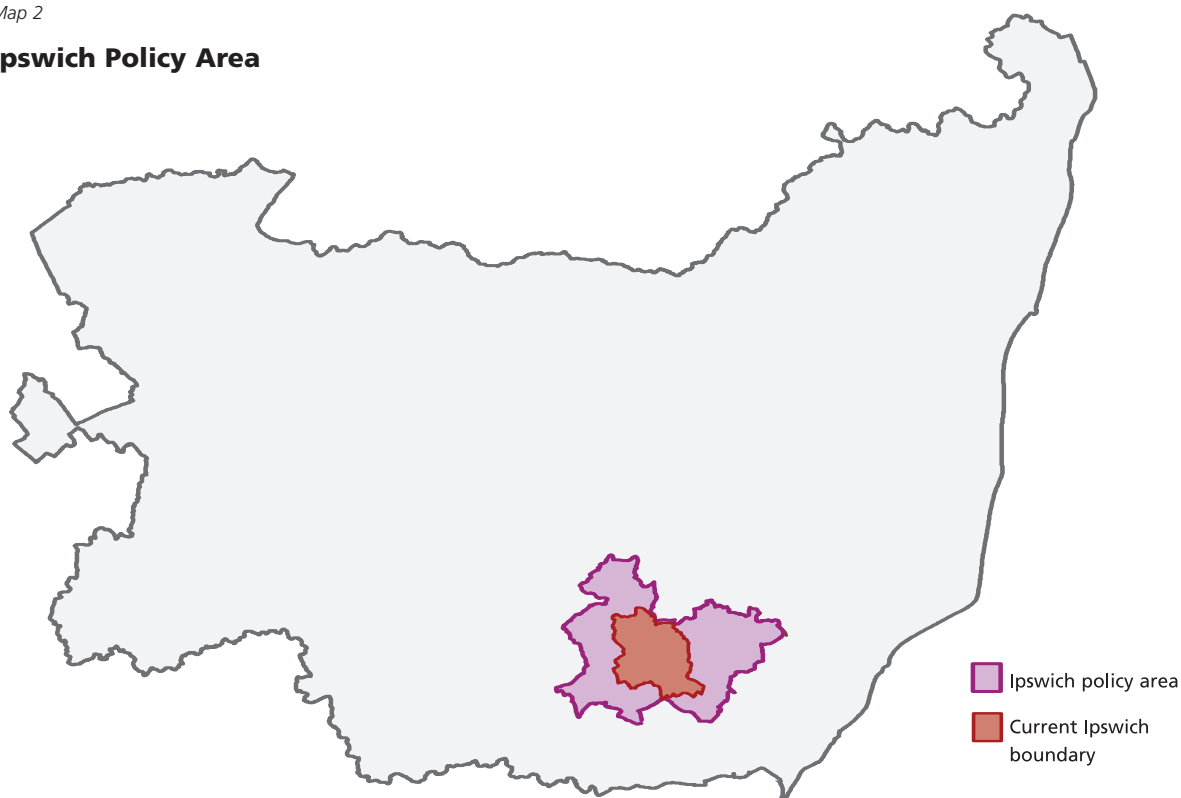
3. Ipswich - place-shaping within Suffolk and the wider region

3.4 As the Suffolk County Structure Plan states in creating the Ipswich Policy Area (see Map 2. below):

“As the largest urban area in the County, and the largest centre of employment, Ipswich exerts considerable influence over a wide surrounding area. The Ipswich Sub-Region extends well beyond the boundary of Ipswich Borough into the three adjoining Districts: Babergh, Mid-Suffolk and Suffolk Coastal. Also much recent housing and employment development has taken place in parishes immediately outside the Borough boundary. Many people travel into the Borough for work, school, shopping and leisure services; Ipswich residents travel outside of the built-up area for work, leisure activities and access to the countryside. There are limitations on land available for development within the Borough boundary, which necessitate an examination of a wider Policy Area to meet the requirements for housing and employment growth centred on Ipswich.”

Map 2

Ipswich Policy Area



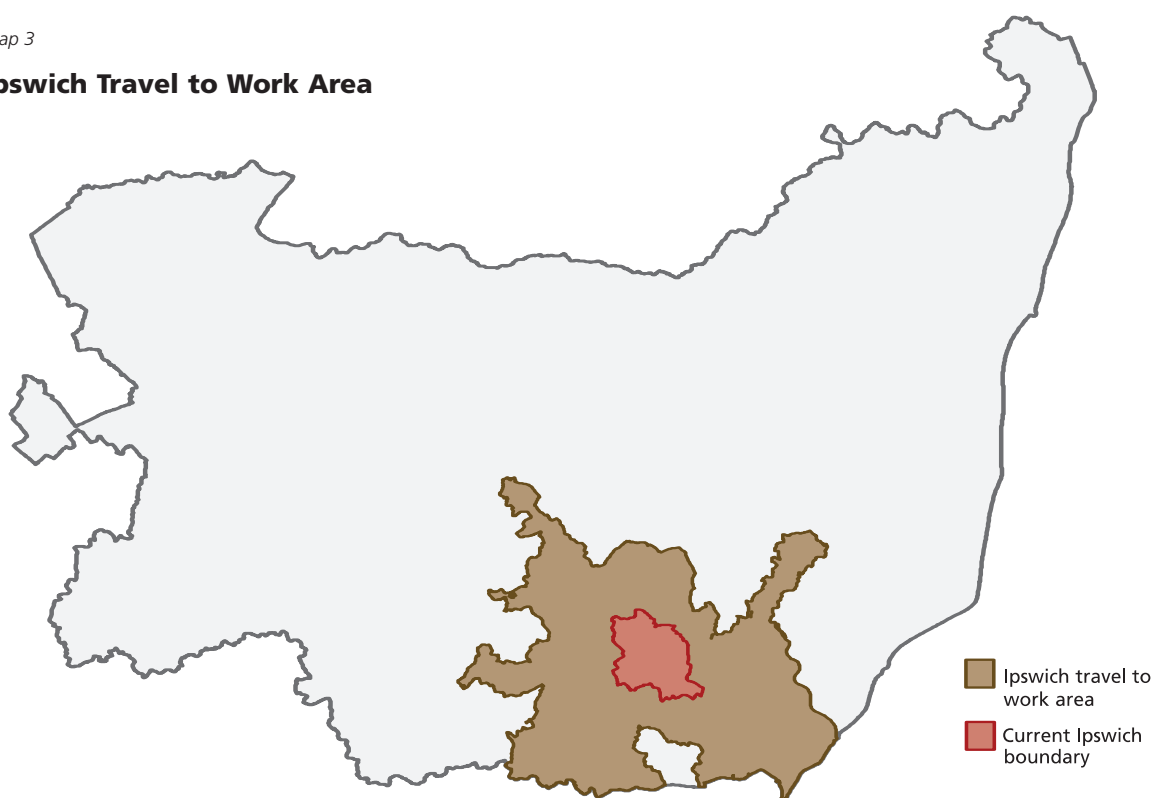
3. Ipswich - place-shaping within Suffolk and the wider region

3.5 Ipswich has a very strong policy of building on brownfield sites with over 99% being achieved in 2006/07. This policy would continue and at the same time the Council would seek to protect the green belt around Ipswich and encourage sustainable communities.

3.6 In terms of travel patterns, DCLG research has identified Ipswich as a node, showing that the commuter flow is reasonably contained. The broader catchment area (with 30-35% people commuting into Ipswich) identifies Suffolk Coastal as the key commuter origin, but when the limit is lowered to 20-25% of people commuting this area extends to include Babergh and Mid-Suffolk as well. *Previous research carried out by the SDA showed that there are similar figures for people who commute from Ipswich to Suffolk Coastal, for example to work at Felixstowe Port or Adastral Park. There is a strong relationship of commuting between Ipswich and its surrounding districts, which demonstrates that Ipswich is a vibrant economic area. Equally Ipswich has a strong relationship with its surrounding area and wider Suffolk through the provision of first class leisure and cultural facilities. The Ipswich travel to work area is highlighted in *Map 3* below.

Map 3

Ipswich Travel to Work Area



3. Ipswich - place-shaping within Suffolk and the wider region

3.7 Transport networks have been highlighted through the Eddington report as being vital to the economic development of urban areas and their catchments. One of the key recommendations is that over the next 20 years, the three strategic economic priorities for transport policy should be: congested and growing city catchments; the key interurban corridors and the key international gateways that are showing signs of increasing congestion and unreliability. These are the most heavily used and economically significant parts of the network. In order to identify the best policies, decision makers need therefore to understand all the characteristics of the local economy, and an area's physical environment and urban geography. Eddington has stated that one solution will not fit all urban areas, and there is scope for a significantly improved understanding of the types of policies which will most effectively support urban economies.

3.8 The Haven Gateway Partnership (HGP), with its ports and road infrastructure, is vital to the regional and national economy. Work is under way to look at these issues however in order to realise the potential within the sub region - a strong lead is required. A unitary Ipswich on expanded boundaries could provide this.

3.9 Ipswich is one of 8 local authorities making up the Greater Haven Gateway Housing Sub-Region. The Housing Sub-Region is based on the Haven Gateway Partnership area but includes the whole of each local authority as well as Braintree District Council. The Housing Sub-Region contains 2 urban boroughs, Ipswich and Colchester, and includes surrounding rural districts. Recently, the Suffolk Districts of the Housing Sub-Region (Ipswich, Babergh, Suffolk Coastal and Mid Suffolk) commissioned a Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Early findings confirm our belief that there is a distinct housing market focused on Ipswich and its travel to work area with smaller 'niche' markets in the surrounding rural districts for second homes and older people's housing. Compared to rural housing markets the Ipswich housing market is characterised by less self-containment (more people moving in and out), a younger population, higher levels of deprivation, and lower (but rising) house prices which are out of reach for people in lower paid employment. Ipswich has more flats, a buoyant private rented sector (particularly for flats) and more social housing than rural districts.

3.10 The bids for new affordable homes are now organised on a sub-regional basis with regular monitoring by the Housing Sub-Region's Steering Group and the Housing Corporation. A sub-regional Choice-Based Letting Scheme will be in place later this year.

3. Ipswich - place-shaping within Suffolk and the wider region

3.11 Looking at education and skills, there has been a major investment in higher and further education in Ipswich. University Campus Suffolk (UCS) opened in 2007 and, phase 1 of the university, a new flagship building will be open in August 2008 on the Ipswich Waterfront. Phase 2 is already being planned and Suffolk New College (a £70m investment) is being constructed alongside as part of a new Education Quarter in the waterfront area. These developments are a step-change in the education and skills offer in the region. In addition a £65m new sixth form centre is being developed for south-west Ipswich and south Suffolk. This will be built in Ipswich and is a collaboration between schools.

3.12 Ipswich acts as a hub for culture and leisure activities in both the immediate and wider areas. This is based on:

- facilities such as the Regent and New Wolsey theatres, the Corn Exchange, national and independent cinemas, museums and galleries, sports centres and 670 hectares of parks and open spaces;
- organisations like DanceEast, Red Rose Chain and Eastern Angles;
- events like Music Day, Ip-art and the New Wolsey Pulse Festival;
- Ipswich Town Football Club; and
- Team Ipswich.

This is driven through the Vibrant Ipswich and Cultural strategies.

3.13 Strong, distinct and cohesive communities have evolved across the town over generations. There are a number of distinct neighbourhoods, each with their own individual identity, some having been established during medieval times and many others from the pre- and post-war housing booms. Most recently we have had new communities established on brownfield sites such as Ravenswood and the Waterfront. Communities tend to have their own local shopping facilities, community centres and schools with which residents identify.

3.14 Ipswich has new communities living alongside older, more established ones. Fifty years ago, the dynamic Afro-Caribbean community arrived and they have contributed greatly to the new Ipswich culture. Later, Asian communities - Bengali, Hindi, Sikh, Turkish, Kurdish and Chinese - have come to Ipswich. Each has their own special needs and unique challenges which Ipswich Borough Council strives to meet. Now, many Polish, Portuguese, Lithuanians and Slovaks are living in Ipswich. Historically Ipswich has been an asylum dispersal area attracting refugees from eg: Africa. More recently Ipswich has seen a significant increase in

3. Ipswich - place-shaping within Suffolk and the wider region

Indian workers who have come to the town to work in the Hi Tech sector. More than 60 languages are spoken in the town and this has an impact on schools and social welfare services. Ensuring cohesion is a key challenge. We can do more as a unitary council.

3.15 As an urban area, Ipswich has areas of affluence and attainment alongside significant pockets of deprivation, under-achievement and need. There are major problems with crime and disorder, drugs, prostitution, poor health, sub-standard housing, transport and congestion. In deprived communities these effects tend to be cyclical, passing down the generations. Ipswich has two areas that are in the top 6% of the greatest deprivation areas nationally, with a total of 5 in the top 10% and 19 in the top 20%.

3.16 Constraints to achieving growth targets are:

- Image: poor image will affect the ability of Ipswich to attract investment;
- Education and Skills: Qualifications are not the right type to upskill the labour market to meet the changing profile of the economy. That is why Ipswich Borough Council has invested in the new university;
- Ensuring we have a pool of labour/staff skills to meet increasing demand;
- Infrastructure: Ipswich needs to improve its connectivity with other Regional Cities and the rest of the UK, eg: road, rail, air travel;
- Congestion and movement within the urban area;
- Ipswich needs to create 18,000 additional jobs by 2020. We need to be a unitary to meet this tough target;
- Low income compared to the rest of Suffolk and the East of England average.

3.17 To deliver growth Ipswich will focus on:

- Attracting investment to strengthen its economy to create employment and build enterprise;
- Improving infrastructure - addressing transport, education, health and cultural needs of a changing population. Considerable housing development is taking place on brownfield sites (99% in 2006/07) which has an impact on increased traffic movement and places greater requirements on health services, ie: registering for GPs and education facilities;
- Increasing the skill levels of its community to deliver economic growth in a sustainable way;

3. Ipswich - place-shaping within Suffolk and the wider region

- Ensuring there is an appropriate supply of land and buildings;
- Developing a close relationship with EEDA, which is helping to regenerate the area.

Growth and development will change the dynamics within neighbourhoods.

Our strategic planning will ensure that:

- The benefits of growth cascade down to local communities already living in Ipswich;
- Deprived people in neighbouring wards also have access to opportunities;
- We focus on growing the service and knowledge-based sectors and also education, health, retail and transport and communications sectors.

3.18 A unitary government solution for Ipswich will balance its role as an economic hub and engine for growth in the region with the ability to provide sufficient focus on and services to meet the needs of existing communities.

4. Challenges for local government now and in the future

4.1 Local government has changed radically over the last 10 years. This pace of change is set to accelerate. New unitary authorities need to be able to meet the challenges ahead:

- Stronger strategic leadership and place shaping
- A stronger sense of partnership
- A strengthened role for economic development with an emphasis on strong urban regional centres
- Increased connectivity of local politicians with the community
- A duty to promote democracy
- Excellent, responsive services which provide value for money
- Empowered communities who genuinely feel able to have their say and be listened to
- Tighter financial settlements
- Community cohesion
- Climate change

4.2 In designing the Ipswich Concept we have considered these challenges carefully and how best to meet them to address the varying needs of the whole of Suffolk.

5. The Ipswich Concept

5.1 The current Ipswich boundary was established in 1974 and is very tight especially in comparison with other urban areas. Growth in Ipswich has been mainly on the eastern boundaries (Suffolk Coastal) and to the south-west (Babergh).

5.2 We believe a properly defined unitary Ipswich is necessary to meet the range of uniquely urban challenges presented, to play a strong place-shaping role in its distinct area which is vital for the economy of Suffolk and the sub-region.

5.3 In order to fulfil this role and to deliver services and growth effectively we believe Ipswich needs to have an extension to its current boundaries to better reflect its 'natural area' both now and into the future. Indeed, the need to enhance the boundaries of Ipswich was raised in the responses of Suffolk Coastal and Babergh to Ipswich's unitary bid last year.

5.4 Within this overall concept we believe there are three boundary sub-options that would provide viable solutions. These are discussed in more detail in Section 7. The options would provide a revised range of approximate populations from 130,000 to 210,000 at mid 2005 levels potentially rising by a further 20% by 2021.

5.5 We have a shared vision for an enlarged Ipswich unitary authority.

We want Ipswich to be a vibrant, prosperous and thriving regional centre with a strong urban focus that drives sustainable growth and prosperity for all and enables robust, coherent and active community engagement and empowerment.

5.6 This vision is underpinned by a number of fundamental principles:

- We will perform a strong place-shaping role for the area supporting both its urban centre and surrounding communities.
- We will recognise, promote and encourage positive leadership in the new communities so that they play a full part in the new unitary authority.
- We will provide strong leadership for and be accountable to the people of the Ipswich area.
- We will design and deliver services that meet the diverse needs of all our localities and communities.
- We will build on current successful neighbourhood management and empowerment practices.

5. The Ipswich Concept

- We will provide joined-up and integrated services together with our public and third sector partners.
- We will significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery and maintain a relentless focus on value for money.
- We will be an engine of growth benefiting both the Ipswich area and the rest of Suffolk.
- We will play a bigger role with RCE, the Haven Gateway Partnership and will work closely with our other local authority partners.

5.7 Ipswich has a very strong sense of place with its own local identities, eg: the Evening Star newspaper, Ipswich Town Football Club, Ipswich Buses, Team Ipswich etc.

6. The case for an Ipswich Concept

6.1 We believe an Ipswich unitary authority with extended boundaries along with other unitary authorities for the rest of Suffolk fully satisfies all of the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs) and present our evidence against each one below.

Affordability

6.2 The redrawing of Suffolk from 8 two-tier authorities into a smaller number of unitary councils will provide significant savings at the macro level with the removal of all existing authorities and the subsequent opportunities to develop shared service or partnership delivery between the newly formed authorities. The savings and efficiencies generated would reduce overall public expenditure levels potentially resulting in lower Council Tax levels across the whole county.

6.3 The approximate population sizes for Ipswich set out in this concept are well in line with other unitary authorities that are demonstrably affordable such as Bedford, Telford, Reading, Southend and projected growth levels would be greater than many existing Unitaries.

6.4 We believe the enlarged boundary will enable us to both:

- serve a wider area at a marginal cost by 'sweating the assets', eg: refuse collection and Council Tax collection and by using efficient delivery channels such as contact centre and web; and
- benefit from the economies of scale offered by increased population and tax yield and improved purchasing power.

6.5 A unitary Ipswich authority, in common with other unitaries created in Suffolk, will additionally provide a range of efficiency savings arising from:

- the rationalisation of buildings, sites and resources. There are currently 5 council headquarters within 12 miles of Ipswich, this will provide significant opportunities for asset and delivery rationalisation.

6. The case for an Ipswich Concept

- the reduction of management overheads through the introduction of a flatter, more coherent organisational structure;
- the rationalisation and centralisation of support services;
- integration and transformation of currently fragmented service delivery and opportunities for collaborative working with other agencies;
- improved and joint commissioning and procurement;
- opportunities to rationalise and share infrastructure with other delivery partners; and
- an overall reduction in the number of councillors and their associated support costs.

6.6 As a minimum, we believe we can improve upon the level of savings for the Ipswich area set out in our unitary bid (£8.7m per annum). At the Suffolk level, the savings should be of the order of the £30m per annum identified in Cheshire, a county with a similar set of circumstances.

6.7 We acknowledge that the smaller the number of unitary authorities the greater the likely overall savings will be. However, this needs to be balanced against council structures that are so large that they require significant sub-structures to support them - as currently witnessed in services delivered by Suffolk County Council.

A broad cross-section of stakeholder support

6.8 We believe a persuasive case has already been made for a unitary Ipswich to the people, businesses, partners and stakeholders of Ipswich and the surrounding area and we have demonstrated widespread support for it. Of particular importance are the views of the people in the Ipswich area. In a MORI poll conducted in June 2007, 61% of those who expressed a preference supported a unitary Ipswich. One key aspect of the poll involved

6. The case for an Ipswich Concept

questions about sense of place, service provision and democracy under a unitary council. The results set out in the table (Figure 9) below speak for themselves:

Figure 9.

Stakeholder Support	<i>Improve or Stay the Same</i>	<i>Get Worse</i>	<i>Don't Know</i>
People's sense of local community	77%	16%	7%
Access to local councillors	73%	19%	8%
Being accountable to local people	72%	20%	7%
Quality of services	71%	21%	8%
Responding to people's wishes	69%	24%	7%
Efficiency	69%	23%	8%
Duplication	66%	18%	17%
Cost of services	57%	33%	10%

6.9 From the extensive consultation undertaken between April and June 2007, support for a unitary Ipswich was received from a wide spectrum of individuals and organisations, including all local politicians and a number of charities and businesses.

6.10 Many of the less positive responses to our consultation last year questioned the value and benefit of unitary status on the basis of current boundaries together with the perception that there would be a potential negative impact on the rest of Suffolk. With extended boundaries and the emphasis now on a whole Suffolk unitary solution, we believe local support will be further strengthened.

Strategic leadership

Place Shaping

6.11 A smaller number of unitary councils across Suffolk will better reflect the demographic and topographic nature of the county and will create a more natural sense of place for the public.

6. The case for an Ipswich Concept

6.12 We believe unitary government in Ipswich will enhance the sense of place felt by its citizens. The MORI poll results set out in paragraph 6.8 clearly demonstrate this.

Leadership and political model

6.13 Looking specifically at the Ipswich concept, one Council for Ipswich will have:

- one set of local Councillors thus delivering simplified democracy and clear accountability
- four-yearly elections
- a single strategic partnership and LAA
- a new Leader and Cabinet model
- a number of Area Committees together with parish and town councils
- a Youth Council

This will provide:

- Clear community leadership and vision.
- A focus on issues and problems for Ipswich.
- A clear role as a convenor for delivery of joined up services.
- People and communities with a big say in decisions affecting them, their neighbourhood and the area.
- Accountability for all decisions of the council.
- A clear mandate to lobby regionally and nationally on behalf of the people.
- A focus for working with neighbours and partners to improve the wider area.

6.16 We will be replacing an inefficient and confusing two-tier structure and its associated diverse sets of policies and delivery mechanisms with a single council with a single political and governance structure covering a logical geographical area.

6.17 Currently, Suffolk County Council has a cabinet which does not have any councillors from Ipswich. This would be even more democratically disastrous if there was a single Suffolk unitary.

6. The case for an Ipswich Concept

6.18 An enlarged Ipswich unitary authority would adopt the new style Leader and Cabinet model. The Leader will be elected for a four-year term. It will be the responsibility of the Leader to appoint portfolio holders from within the Cabinet. Clear accountabilities will be established.

6.19 We would look to rationalise the number of councillors for Ipswich depending upon the size of the new unitary. Currently Ipswich has 16 wards of 3 councillors, ie: 48. We would expect the number of councillors to remain broadly in line with current numbers. Further work is being undertaken in this area.

6.20 We will use powers to enable Councillors to make decisions in their own wards and will enable them to be more effective by providing them with their own neighbourhood budget.

Overview and Scrutiny

6.21 We would propose to implement robust arrangements with four overview and scrutiny committees with responsibilities as follows:

- Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee - the overall work programme and resources etc;
- Environment - economy, crime, planning and local environmental quality;
- Community - adult social care, health, housing, culture and the third sector; and
- Children and Learning - education and children and young people's issues.

6.21 As a community leader, a unitary Ipswich council will embrace its role in the scrutiny of public services with the primary aim of ensuring there is a customer-focused approach to service delivery. Representatives from the voluntary and community sector will be co-opted on to overview and scrutiny committees.

6.22 We will avoid duplication wherever possible and will continue to undertake joint health scrutiny with other Suffolk unitary councils and focus on issues relating to Ipswich through our own community overview and scrutiny committee.

Developing the Local Strategic Partnership - One-Ipswich

6.23 Ipswich has a strong Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) One-Ipswich, chaired by the Leader of the Borough Council. Councillors from each forum area in the town also sit on the board so ensuring there is effective focus on local issues. The refreshed One-Ipswich

6. The case for an Ipswich Concept

community strategy 'Everybody Matters' sets out the long-term vision for Ipswich and the key projects the partnership will focus on in the short term to deliver this vision.

Our Vision: Everybody Matters

We want Ipswich to be a vibrant, prosperous and thriving place. We will address deprivation and inequality in neighbourhoods and develop an economically dynamic and enterprising society so everyone in Ipswich can:

- Be prosperous and have a place to live
- Be healthy and stay well
- Achieve their potential and enjoy life
- Have a greater say and better choices
- Keep safe
- Live in friendly and supportive communities

6.24 The One-Ipswich Board has put in place a development programme 'Getting Fit for the Future' to strengthen the LSP. Ground rules to promote effective partnership working have been adopted and key principles are in place to clarify how the LSP will operate to deliver effective outcomes for people.

6.25 An enlarged Ipswich will build on this strategy and partnership to engage with and encompass the needs of the wider area.

6.26 A new sustainable community strategy will be drawn up with a specific mandate to ensure the delivery of the long-term vision for expanded Ipswich.

6.27 Thematic partnership boards, chaired by relevant portfolio-holders will ensure there is effective leadership and partnership working. It is recognised that some key partners will not be coterminus with our new boundaries. We will work closely with Suffolk PCT, Suffolk Constabulary, and other unitaries to establish appropriate partnerships which enable full engagement of partners but reduce any duplication. We will consider Joint Strategic Partnerships such as a Children's Trust with other unitaries.

6. The case for an Ipswich Concept

6.28 A single-tier LAA will enable strong political and organisational leadership together with targeted funding and a performance culture that properly focuses on the specific needs of the local area. Priorities for the LAA will be around:

- Deprivation
- Educational attainment
- Crime
- Health
- Jobs
- Housing

6.29 Ipswich operates a scheme of Area Forums underpinned by a multi-agency steering group comprising ward councillors, statutory partners and representatives from Residents Associations to look at the long term planning needs of the community and ensure any issues arising from the forums are actioned.

6.30 A unitary Ipswich would have Area Committees to enable ward councillors to use devolved powers to work with partners and forums in order to make decisions about service delivery, within budgets, and to develop future plans and monitor performance.

6.31 The Area Forum and Area Committee structures provide accountability down to local neighbourhood level.

6.32 We will fully discuss with existing parish/town councils their current powers and look at how these can be developed further within our overall model. We also aim to learn from existing parish/town councils and integrate best practice into the model for Area Committees.

Young people

6.33 One important way of addressing the issues of this key section of the community will be to set up a Youth Council made up of representatives from each secondary school, college and special school along with 16-18 year olds who have left school/college. It will have an important role in helping to develop council and other public sector services for young people along with involvement in specific relevant projects.

6. The case for an Ipswich Concept

6.34 New boundaries for Ipswich could provide an opportunity to ensure alignment with current school pyramids and clusters. This will ensure these strong partnerships are not disrupted.

Communities of interest

6.35 Ipswich supports devolution. In recent years, we have established various management boards (eg: the Housing Management Board and the Holywells Park Management Board) where competing views of stake-holders can be debated. This has resulted in some thorny issues being resolved by common consent instead of setting stakeholder groups against the Council. We also have experience of devolving responsibility for business services. April 2007 saw the start of our first Business Improvement District: business rate-payers will take control of the strategic and service delivery decisions of this new fund. We will examine the case for introducing other new boards.

Sub-Regional Leadership

6.36 As the Government's Sub-National Review proceeds to the implementation stage, it will be critical for EEDA that one of its 'engines for growth' - the Haven Gateway, is comprised of strategically focused organisations capable of delivering effective development programmes.

6.37 The HGP is seeking to respond to this by adopting an Integrated Development Programme supported hopefully by a focussed MAA which will identify key shared objectives and targets to be achieved.

6.38 A single-tier local government in the Ipswich area would create a stronger urban centre with a clear focus and the real ability to provide strategic leadership on such economic development and growth issues. It would enable a more streamlined HGP membership, making for more efficient decision-making and programme delivery.

6.39 It would also enable and enhance the consideration of regional issues in the context of this dynamic growth area. A fuller role within RCE would be possible, which would have significant benefits for regional policy-making and aligning local policies and plans to regional strategies.

6. The case for an Ipswich Concept

6.40 Strong strategic leadership will also deliver significant benefits for other unitary authorities in Suffolk. They will be able to focus on the key issues affecting them.

Neighbourhood Empowerment

6.41 Ipswich Borough Council is recognised as one of the National Empowering Councils. Our whole approach in this area will be to build on what has worked successfully to date in Ipswich and to learn from best practice in any parish/town councils which may become part of the new unitary Ipswich.

6.42 Ipswich has a strong track record of understanding both its communities of place and interest. Our current practice is to use an evidenced-based approach to target key issues in Ipswich. Ward level profiles are used to inform the overarching community profile of Ipswich.

6.43 Our Area Forum structure provides a platform for local empowerment with Safer Neighbourhood Teams aligned to these. A review of the forum structure will be undertaken to explore how the community and residents in an enlarged Ipswich want to engage with the Council in the future. In addition we will ensure children and young people's community clusters fully integrate into this model.

6.44 One of the outcomes in the Ipswich Community Strategy is 'for people to live in friendly and supportive communities and have a better say'. We are now working through our Local Strategic Partnership to develop a Neighbourhood Engagement and Empowerment Action Plan to achieve this outcome in our community strategy. This work will be carried out in the context of the new 'duty to involve local representatives'. This plan will set out how we will work with partners to rationalise and streamline the way we work within our neighbourhoods. We will develop a neighbourhood structure that enables us to engage and involve the public in a more strategic way; be responsive to local issues; work smarter, more effectively and efficiently and use our resources in a better way.

6. The case for an Ipswich Concept

6.45 Area Committees will enable Councillors to use devolved powers, to work with partners in order to make decisions about service delivery, develop future plans and monitor performance. Councillors will, as at present, be involved in the Area Forums, Safer Neighbourhood Teams and steering groups. We will work with statutory partners and the voluntary sector to strengthen the role of ward councillors enabling them to play a bigger part in acting as the link between the community, the Council and the statutory sector.

6.46 It is vital that unitary authorities for Suffolk are big enough to work but local enough to connect with local communities - many of which are around a small number of streets.

Area Committees will:

- Analyse needs and wants;
- Commission work through task and finish groups;
- Prepare action plans;
- Scrutinise performance and the impact of plans;
- Use devolved powers to make decisions about service delivery within a set budget;
- Develop and implement a neighbourhood engagement plan

Value for Money and Equity on Public Services

6.47 We believe that an enlarged Ipswich offers a more sustainable basis for delivery of VFM services and provides far greater scope for integration. A single-tier authority can be more responsive and adaptive to local need and to not adopt a one-size-fits-all approach. Increasing devolution of service design and delivery to a local level to meet diverse needs will provide greater equity.

Arrangements for Effective, Efficient and Integrated Services

6.48 There are significant differences between Ipswich and rural Suffolk in relation to its younger population, high teenage pregnancy rate, significant challenges in addressing low educational aspiration and achievement and high crime levels. This means services need to be focused on addressing these issues.

6. The case for an Ipswich Concept

6.49 A single-tier authority provides far greater scope for the design of effective end-to-end services. We will look for early opportunities to better integrate services such as Housing and Adult Social care, Environmental Protection and Trading Standards, Children's Services with Culture, Sport and Leisure, Transport and Land Use Planning and Waste Disposal and Collection.

6.50 In addition we would continue to explore opportunities to join-up services with other public sector partners such as the Police, the PCT and the voluntary sector through joint commissioning, co-location of service delivery and the sharing of back office functions.

6.51 We also consider there to be significant potential for the transformation of major services currently delivered by other Authorities through the reduction of management and support overheads and greater tailoring for local circumstances.

6.52 Where there is a clear business case, we would also look to develop shared services on either a Suffolk-wide basis or sub-regional arrangements with analogue authorities such as those in the Regional Cities East group and theHaven Gateway Partnership.

Best Use of Modern Procurement Methods

6.53 An expanded Ipswich authority is fully committed to a right-sourcing policy of delivering services on the most appropriate, optimal quality and value for money basis. We will deliver services through a mixed economy by either:

- buying in goods and services;
- evaluating other service delivery options including partnership and shared service opportunities;
- commissioning services from the private sector, voluntary sector or other agencies as appropriate; or
- running services in-house.

6.54 We expect to progressively move towards a commissioning model and the associated development of a strong intelligent client function and capability.

6. The case for an Ipswich Concept

Demonstrating Value for Money

6.55 We will develop a clear business case for the implementation of the new authority, this will target areas for efficiency and value for money improvements in the early years. The case will be supported by a benefits realisation plan that will be actively managed throughout the implementation period.

6.56 Value for Money will be at the heart of how the new authority will continue to operate. We would expect to continue our current practices and design and manage an ongoing efficiency programme and undertake a rolling programme of Service Delivery Reviews.

Proper Arrangements to meet the needs of local people

6.57 We have systems in place to engage and involve the public to play a role in influencing the way partners and the council works. However, we recognise that we can do more. Our area profiling and review of our existing neighbourhood structure will help us identify how we can improve community involvement.

6.58 Work will continue through the LSP to explore how we can delegate funding at community level to promote community engagement and empowerment for the community to identify preventative services.

6.59 We would expect to continue with the current practice of undertaking periodic community surveys to find out residents views about life in their local area and what they believe should be the key issues for the council to focus on. The output from these surveys informs council priorities and the development of service delivery arrangements.

7 . Unitary Options for Ipswich and Suffolk

7.1 Within our overall concept we have identified three potential sub-options for Ipswich. These are briefly described below and explained in more detail in the overview maps, key facts and analysis at Appendix A, B and C.

7.2 **Option 1**

A unitary Ipswich based on an expanded urban area with unitary Councils for East and West Suffolk (Appendix A)

7.3 **Option 2**

A unitary Ipswich based on the urban area with unitary Councils for East and West Suffolk and Waveney and Great Yarmouth (Appendix B).

7.4 **Option 3**

Creating a City Region around the northern Haven Gateway drawing together a larger area with an urban core and related rural and semi-rural hinterland, along with East Suffolk and West Suffolk unitaries (Appendix C).

7.5 While not a preferred option, all three Ipswich options can also work with a 'doughnut' solution for the rest of Suffolk.

7.6 We do not consider that a unitary Suffolk is a viable solution. While we acknowledge there might be greater savings from dissolving local authorities than in the other unitary options we believe this is offset by the ongoing delivery inefficiencies of a large remote organisation. In addition we do not consider that a single Council can best engage and empower local communities and neighbourhoods and deliver tailored services for the many and varied communities and localities across the County. Ipswich people and Newmarket people have far different issues!

7 . Unitary Options for Ipswich and Suffolk

7.7 We believe all three sub-options proposed have a differing combination of merits as identified in our high level assessment against the KLOEs. However, what they all do is provide focus for key communities, strong leadership and local engagement to enable challenges of the present and future to be best met with a strong emphasis on VFM approaches.

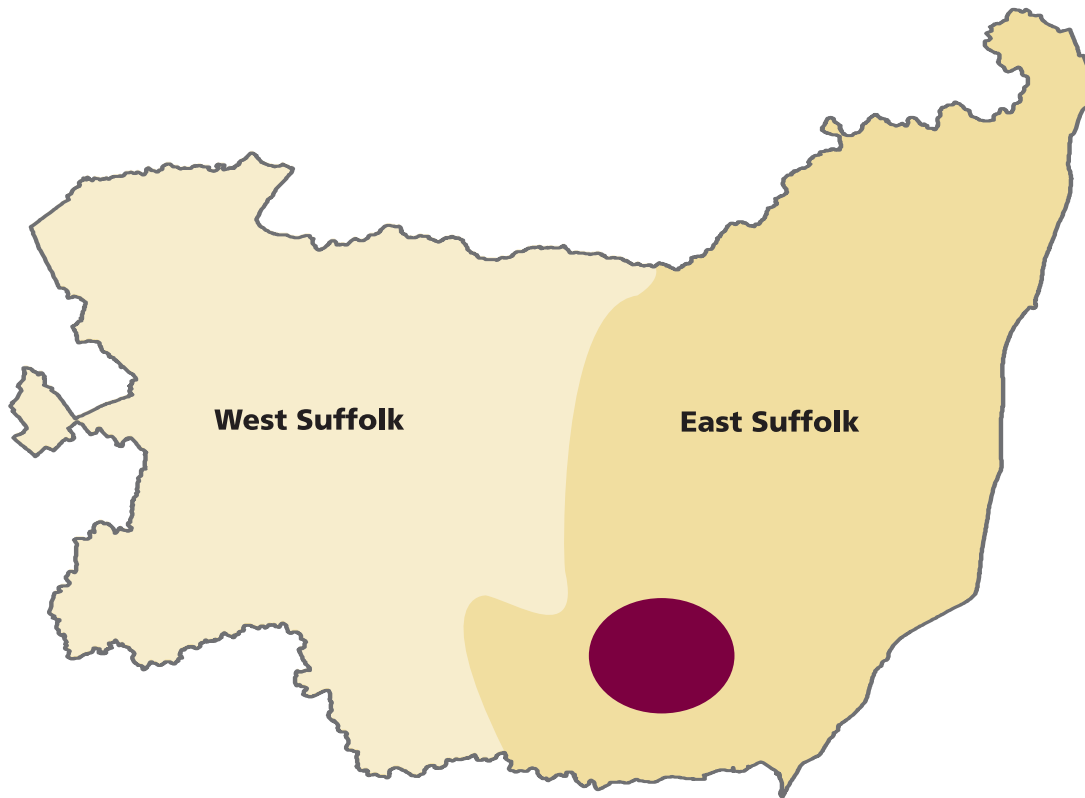
8. Conclusion

8.1 We have made the case that any unitary government solution for the whole of Suffolk must be able to meet the diverse social and service challenges presented by our rural and urban communities and be able to drive the differing economies in the County and the wider sub-region.

8.2 The concept we commend to the Committee is a unitary Ipswich with extended boundaries alongside one, two or, depending on the outcome of the cross-border evaluation, potentially three other unitary councils in Suffolk.

8.3 We have presented three possible sub-options for a unitary Ipswich concept and welcome the opportunity to discuss these further with the Boundary Committee and with our colleagues in the other authorities across the county in order to find the optimal solution for Suffolk.

Option 1 Expanded Urban Ipswich



This sub-option expands the boundaries of Ipswich to better reflect the natural urban area taking into account projected future development and growth.

Population figures (Mid 2005 estimates)

Ipswich	154000
East Suffolk	269000
West Suffolk	267000

Affordability

- 8 Councils to 3 with significant associated savings
- Substantial increase in population and tax yield
- Able to deliver services to the wider area at marginal cost
- Significant scope for efficiency savings

Option 1

Expanded Urban Ipswich

Broad Cross-Section of Support

- Welcomed by new communities who consider themselves naturally part of Ipswich
- Retains existing support for original unitary proposal
- Will gain support from those who considered original unitary boundaries unsustainable
- Support from the business community, eg: the Chamber of Commerce

Strategic Leadership

- Builds on the strengths of the original Ipswich unitary bid
- A logical boundary for an expanding Ipswich with clear sense of place
- A Leader/Cabinet model providing clear and visible leadership
- Strong vision for and focus on the urban and social issues affecting Ipswich particularly deprivation, crime and multi-ethnic communities
- LSP arrangements remain appropriate and are capable of expansion into the new boundaries
- LAA priorities readily applicable to the wider area
- Strengthen Ipswich's ability to play a sub-regional leadership role
- Better aligned with the Ipswich travel to work area
- Maximises the economic development potential of the extended urban area providing an important driver for growth
- Future proofed for the projected evolution of the urban Ipswich area

Value for Money & Equity on Public Services

- Enhances the advantages of the original Ipswich unitary bid
- Significant savings arising from greater economies of scale
- Greater potential to redesign and integrate services across the wider area
- Increases the opportunities for joining up services with other agencies in the wider area
- VFM and community engagement practices continue to apply with emphasis placed on being responsive to local needs

Option 1

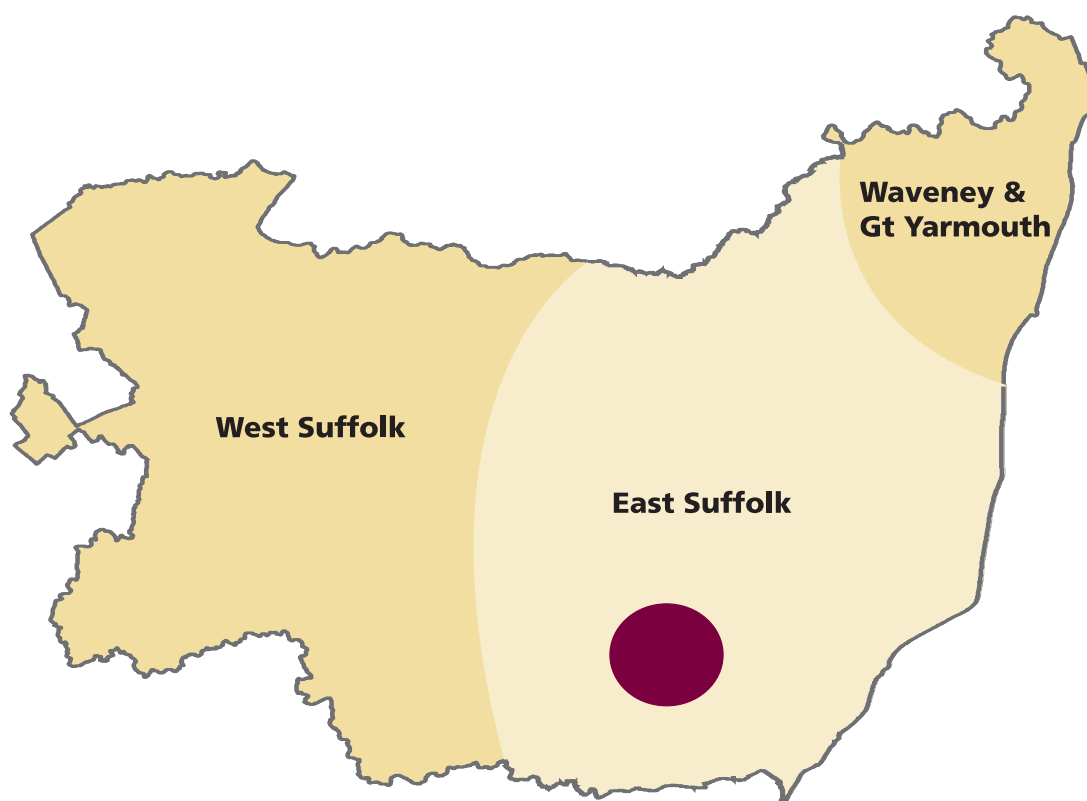
Expanded Urban Ipswich

Neighbourhood Empowerment

- Builds on the strengths of the original Ipswich unitary bid
- Extend existing Area Forum and Committee mechanisms by agreement with and building on best practice in town and parish councils
- Existing community strategy can readily be broadened for the wider area

Appendix B

Option 2 Urban Ipswich



This sub-option is based on the preferred option for Suffolk of the 1994 Local Government Commission for England (Banham Review). It incorporates modifications to the existing boundary of Ipswich to take account of recent changes to the urban settlement pattern.

Population Figures (mid 2005 estimates)

Ipswich	130000
East Suffolk	213000
West Suffolk	231000
Waveney and Yarmouth	208000

Option 2 Urban Ipswich

Affordability

- 8 councils to 31/2 realising considerable savings
- Increase in population and tax yield
- Able to deliver services at virtually no additional cost
- Single tier efficiency savings will be possible

Broad Cross-Section of Support

- Only one whole additional parish so evidently part of current urban Ipswich
- Retains existing support for the original unitary proposal
- Is the preferred option of a number of original supporters of the Ipswich Unitary Bid:
 - Ipswich Borough Council Labour Group
 - Suffolk County Council Labour Group
 - Chris Mole MP (Ipswich)
 - Bob Blizzard MP (Waveney)
 - Hamil Clarke MBE (Chair Ipswich & Suffolk Council for Racial Equality)

Also has support from:

- Anthony Wright MP (Great Yarmouth)
- Charles Clarke MP (Norwich South)
- Ian Gibson MP (Norwich North)
- Waveney District Council Labour Group
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council Labour Group
- Norfolk County Council Labour Group
- Norwich City Council Labour Group also supports a concept for Norfolk with
- Norwich on extended boundaries and a Waveney and Yarmouth unitary council
- A tight urban area has support from some of the parishes surrounding Ipswich

Option 2 Urban Ipswich

Strategic Leadership

- Retains the strengths of the original Ipswich unitary proposal
- Reflects urban Ipswich as it is with a clear sense of place
- Strong vision for and focus on the urban and social issues affecting Ipswich particularly deprivation and crime
- Apply the Leader / Cabinet model and to introduce unitary democratic arrangements to enable clear and visible leadership
- Existing LSP arrangements can continue with marginal expansion
- LAA priorities continue to apply
- Strengthens Ipswich's ability to play a sub-regional leadership role in any future Haven Gateway MAA
- Extension of boundaries gives room to expand in line with existing urban settlement patterns

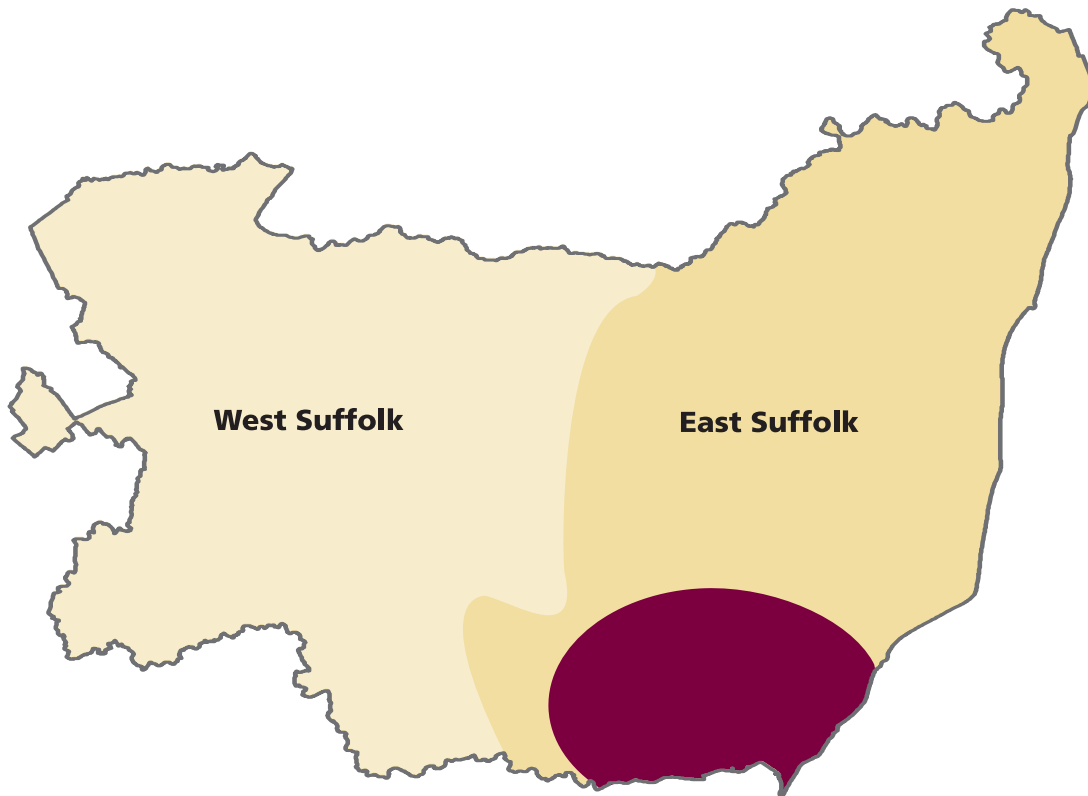
Value for Money & Equity on Public Services

- Retains the strengths of the original Ipswich unitary proposal
- Proposals for service redesign and integration will still apply
- Existing unitary opportunities for joining up and sharing infrastructure with other agencies applies
- VFM and community engagement practices can continue unchanged
- Serves a greater population with no increase in overheads

Neighbourhood Empowerment

- Retains the strengths of the original Ipswich proposal such as local area committees with devolved powers, councillor budgets and a youth council
- Existing Area Forum and Committee arrangements can, by agreement, be readily extended to any parished areas
- Current Community Strategy can be delivered without change

Option 3 Northern Haven Gateway



This sub-option envisages the creation of a City Region built around a natural area in the Northern Haven Gateway region fulfilling the Eddington principles for economic development of urban areas and their catchments

Population figures (mid 2005 estimates)

** n.b. very sensitive to where the E/W boundary is drawn*

Ipswich	210000
East Suffolk	197000*
West Suffolk	283000*

Option 3 Northern Haven Gateway

Affordability

- 8 Councils - 3 realising significant associated savings
- Significant increase in population and tax yield
- The 'cost to serve' will also increase so an increase in delivery resources is required
- More opportunities arising from economies of scale
- Substantial scope for efficiency savings

Broad Cross-Section of Support

- Will need to be tested again given the new communities involved
- Potential increased support from business community

Strategic Leadership

- Builds on existing strong links in the area to establish a sense of place that specifically ties in with travel to work, leisure, shopping and learning patterns
- The Leader/Cabinet model and democratic arrangements tailored to reflect the geography and issues of the wider area will provide clear and visible leadership
- Enables more effective transportation planning and delivery (as per Eddington) and matches area travel patterns. In addition this enables more effective air quality action plans to be delivered,
- LSP arrangements will be redesigned
- Creation of an appropriate set of LAA priorities and effective delivery of the Haven Gateway MAA
- Provides coherent economic leadership for the key sectors in the area
- Effective enabler of economic development and growth in accordance with the Regional Economic Strategy
- Provides a stronger role in encouraging inward investment
- Better placed to play a leadership role in the wider region
- Extremely well future-proofed

Option 3 Northern Haven Gateway

Value for Money and Equity on Public Services

- Greater opportunity to redesign and integrate services within a more sizeable area
- Further opportunities for joining up with other agencies particularly those who play a greater role outside urban Ipswich
- VFM and community engagement practices continue to apply

Neighbourhood Empowerment

- Existing town and parish council powers to be reviewed to strengthen role within a single authority
- Area Forum and Committee mechanisms to build on and adapt best practices from existing town and parish councils
- The Community Strategy will be revisited to better reflect the issues and concerns of the wider area

