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**TO:**

**All Headteachers and  
Chairs of Governors**

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Dear colleague

### **Local Government Review**

You will no doubt have read about the Boundary Committee's proposals for the future organisation of local government in Suffolk which are now out for consultation.

The recommended option is for 2 unitary councils for Suffolk ie. covering all the functions currently carried out by the County Council including education and children's services, combined with the functions currently carried out by the Borough and District Councils such as housing and leisure.

The Boundary Committee are proposing one unitary council covering Ipswich, Felixstowe and surrounding areas, and another covering the remainder of Suffolk. In both proposals, Lowestoft would be covered by a unitary Norfolk Council.

The Boundary Committee are also consulting on an alternative option for a single unitary council covering all of Suffolk, except Lowestoft which in this proposal would also be covered by a Norfolk Council.

I must stress these are options for consultation, not necessarily what will happen. That largely depends on the response from local people, local organisations, businesses and key influencers, such as MPs.

The Boundary Committee are also consulting on a Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft Council alongside the rest of Norfolk as a unitary authority.

All these proposals, the detail and rationale, are available on the Boundary Committee website [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk)

The consultation period runs from **7 July to 26 September**. After this the Boundary Committee will analyse responses and further evidence, including financial viability, before making a final recommendation to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in December.

The Secretary of State will then make a decision around February/March 2009, with any changes to be implemented by April 2010.

I do hope that all of you, your staff and parents, along with many young people, will look at the proposals and actively respond to them by the deadline of 26 September. I know this is not ideal in terms of school holidays, but this is a national timescale for the consultation, and it is important that we all try to respond if possible.

These are radical changes being proposed which will inevitably have an impact on local public services and on all of us as citizens and residents of Suffolk. This is an opportunity to influence the future of the County, and I hope you will all take it, to express your views and preferences, or to ask further questions which you feel the Boundary Committee should take into account in making its final recommendations.

The County Council remains committed to the aspirations and ambitions for the whole County set out in the recently launched Community strategy, which has been signed up to by all the key organisations and businesses in the County following extensive consultation. The County Council is also determined to continue for the foreseeable future with everything we have been doing over the past few years, working alongside schools and colleges and with key partners, to transform learning and skills, and to bring together all services as a Children's Trust Partnership in order to improve outcomes for all children and young people, and provide better support for parents and carers.

I can assure you this will include continuing with the development of 48 children's centres, and all the exciting work in Lowestoft including a new secondary school and new sixth form centre, the SWISS sixth form centre, Building Schools for the Future in Ipswich and Felixstowe, and developing University Campus Suffolk across the whole County.

The County Council, along with Mid-Suffolk District Council, is committed to supporting a new single unitary council for Suffolk, as the best way to achieve the ambitions of the Community Strategy and to continue the transformation of learning and children's services. The County Council believes a single unitary council will provide strong strategic leadership alongside highly local devolved services and neighbourhood empowerment. This is the model we have been developing for children's services over the last three years, with Community Clusters based around groups of schools.

The County Council believes this would deliver excellent value for money, through combining the efforts and administration of the 8 local authorities currently operating in Suffolk. It would build on the high quality services and strong track record of the County Council with the added value of the services currently

operated by the Borough and District Councils such as housing and leisure. This model would also help to further develop the strong partnership with health, the police and the voluntary sector. There would still be local councillors working with local Community Boards to provide a mechanism for engaging local people with their local services. Based around the main urban centres and market towns this would ensure the new unitary council does not get too remote or detached from what matters to local people and local services.

However, you will also want to look at the proposals for the Ipswich and Felixstowe unitary authority, and the Norfolk plus Lowestoft Council which are set out in the Boundary Committee proposals, and to make your own minds up about which option you feel is best suited to deliver the future ambitions for Suffolk. I would just urge you to ensure you respond by the deadline of September 26th.

Sally Simpkin, Area Director for the North, has already offered a meeting for Northern area heads to debate and discuss the proposals, and this has been taken up very positively.

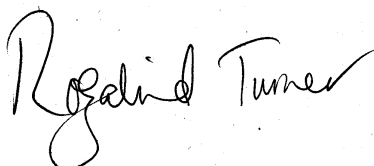
I am sure Vanessa and Allan would be willing to do the same for the Western and Southern areas if this would be appreciated. Ipswich Borough Council, which will be leading on the proposals for an Ipswich and Felixstowe Council, may also want to discuss this with local schools.

We will also be discussing the proposals at the governors forum executive and the schools forum.

We will keep in touch as things develop, and will work closely with you and our borough and district colleagues once the decision has been finalised next spring. As always, no matter what the final outcome is, we will do our best to ensure a smooth transfer to the new arrangements and that children's learning and well-being remain paramount. Our current services, strategies and transformation programmes, including School Organisation Review and planning for the transition of post-16 responsibilities from the Learning and Skills Council, will continue throughout this period.

With best wishes for a good summer break, and with many thanks for all the wonderful work going on throughout Suffolk schools.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosalind Turner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

**Rosalind Turner**  
**Director for Children and Young People**