



Parish Council Briefing

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One Suffolk – smarter, simpler, better

- We firmly believe that one council for Suffolk, delivering all county-wide and local services, is the smartest, simplest and best option
- This is an opportunity for a fresh start and an opportunity to fix those things that frustrate residents and communities about local councils
- We want to hear your views on the **One Suffolk** business case so that we can continue to make it a plan that truly reflects our county and works for all



Publication of the One Suffolk business case

- Following agreement by our Cabinet we submitted the **One Suffolk** proposal to government on 25 September
- We have also published a summary of the business case specifically for Town and Parish councils
- 50 sessions were held over the summer (including businesses, voluntary organisations and residents' associations) – 465 Town and Parish councillors attended and gave us their views



Bold new deal for Town and Parish Councils

You said...	We listened
Local identity and representation -Concerns larger towns dominate decision-making -Emphasis on preserving Suffolk's local identity	Empowering local communities by giving additional powers and funding to town and parish councils as desired. Extra support through creation of 16 new area committees. A council with 140 councillors (representing 4,227 electors each) – comparable to other unitary authorities.
Engagement and transparency -Desire for clear communication, named contacts, and accessible information.	Dedicated phone line and email address for clerks and councillors. Named contacts, locally-based staff. More face-to-face contact.
Simplification and efficiency of services -Support for streamlining services and reducing duplication -Risks of disaggregation	Simplest, most financially efficient model, saving £78.2 million over 5 years. No service disaggregation of critical services like social care and highways. Minimises disruption to service users. A highways service that says 'yes' more – acting swiftly, communicating clearly and delivering results.

Bold new deal for Town and Parish Councils

You said...	We listened
More influence in decision-making -Requests for more influence and transparency in planning decisions -local representatives to be involved more meaningfully	<p>A formal agreement between One Suffolk and the town or parish council.</p> <p>New powers and funding for town and parish councils, in areas such as speed limits and planning applications, where they express a desire for such support and demonstrate the capability to deliver.</p>
Public awareness and understanding -Need for clearer explanations, accessible formats, and inclusive engagement	<p>Residents, businesses and stakeholders would have a single, clear point of contact and accountability for all local government services.</p>
Service quality and frontline investment -Concerns reorganisation could lead to decline in service quality -Requests for joined-up working across services	<p>£40m capital investment fund for market towns, allowing them to focus on local priorities.</p> <p>One Suffolk avoids risks involved when fragmenting the county, creating significant variation in resources, capacity and service delivery.</p> <p>A single clear point of contact and accountability for all local government services makes it simpler for residents.</p>

Potential services/assets for devolution

Assets

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cemeteries and church yards• Memorials• Crematoria• Community centres• Public toilets• Local parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public spaces• Sports grounds• Swimming pools• Play areas• Leisure and arts centres• Roadside verges and other small open spaces
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Services

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minor highways functions and public rights of way (e.g. speed limits, gritting)• Minor development control functions• Soft estate (e.g. grass cutting and weeds)• Fly tipping clearance• Street cleaning• Community transports• Community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Footpath lighting• Community grants• Isolation/volunteering/befriending initiatives• Partnering in local tourism initiatives• Partnering in local climate change initiatives• Street naming• Licensing (e.g. event notices, street trading)• Neighbourhood watch
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Financial analysis of unitary options

	One unitary council (£m)	Two unitary councils (£m)	Three unitary councils (£m)
Total annual benefit	£39.7m	£21.1m	£14.3m
Annual disaggregation cost	£0m	-£13.5m	-£27.0m
Five-year impact of disaggregation	£0m	-£67.6m	-£135.2m
Net benefit after five years	£78.2m	-£48.0m	-£145.3m
Recurring net benefit after five years	£39.4m	£7.3m	-£13.1m



Councillor numbers in the One Suffolk proposal

An area of LGR that has resulted in debate is the number of councillors proposed in each business case. In **One Suffolk**, this number is 140. Each councillor would represent 4,227 electors.

Suffolk currently has 308 elected councillors, excluding town and parish councillors, representing over 200 wards and divisions. 26 of these are 'twin hatters' representing similar communities within both county council divisions and district/borough wards.

- **Guidance is contextual, not prescriptive:** Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) defines council size but does not prescribe a fixed number of councillors.
- **No statutory maximum or minimum:** The Commission has discretion to determine council size.
- **Local variation is expected:** Council size varies widely across England, reflecting unique local needs.
- **Future needs over current arrangements:** Proposals should consider future governance needs.
- **Strategic rationale over benchmarking:** Justify council size based on strategic leadership, scrutiny, regulatory responsibilities, partnership management, and community representation.

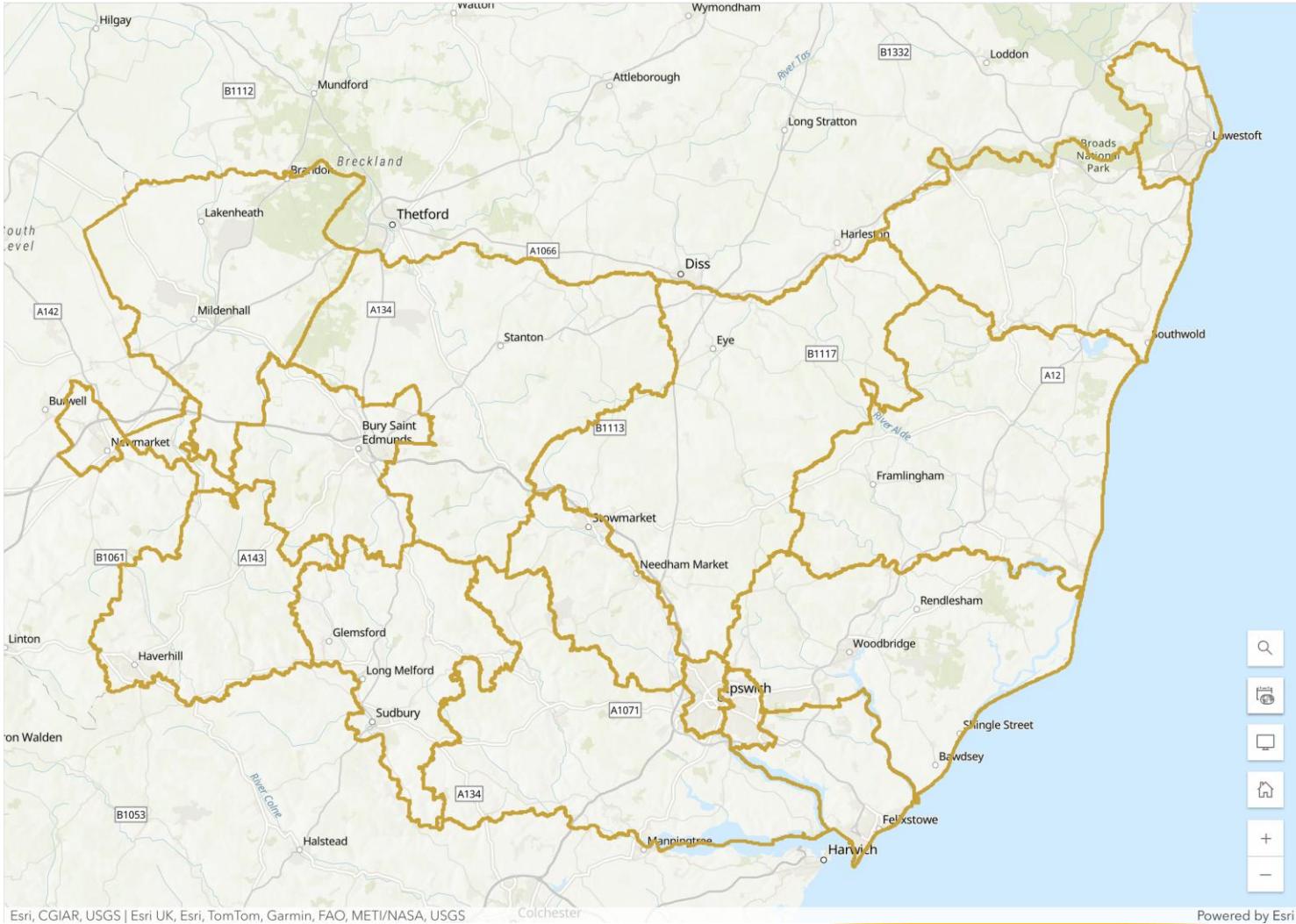


The creation of new Area Committees

- Community Empowerment Bill includes a new duty on local authorities to make appropriate arrangements for effective governance of any neighbourhood area
- Area Committees will anchor decision-making locally, with dedicated support from council officers and tailored approaches to local ambitions
- Area Committees will see councillors convene with local residents and stakeholders, such as local VCFSE organisations and businesses – and Town and Parish councillors
- Area Committees are able to foster their own identities and evolve over time to best fit local circumstances
- Each Area Committee will work with a dedicated council officer(s), who will provide support, coordinate and connect activity in the area and ensure access to local data and intelligence



The creation of new Area Committees



A new town council for Ipswich

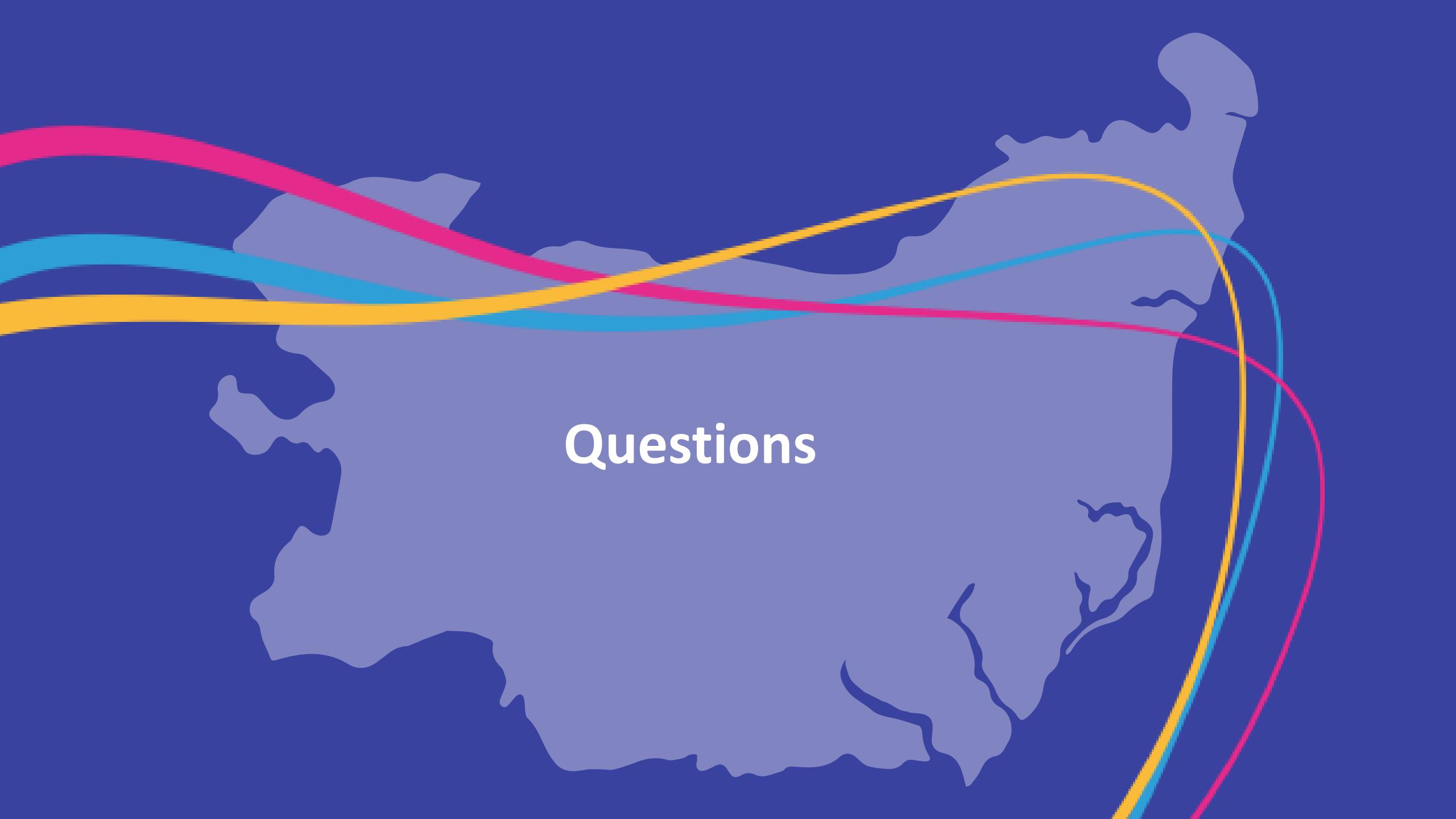
- A new Town Council for Ipswich, repairing and restoring local democracy following the loss of IBC area committees
- A revitalised and enhanced Ipswich Vision Board
- **One Suffolk** will ensure that the civic and ceremonial arrangements, including the historic mayoralty and civic status of Ipswich, are not only protected but enhanced
- Supporting a bid for City Status for Ipswich
- Our ambition is to make sure the benefits of Ipswich flow out to the rest of Suffolk



Next steps

- We expect government to launch a statutory consultation on the different options for a new unitary authority/authorities in November 2025. Please share your views as part of the consultation
- Following the consultation period, there will be a Ministerial decision (spring 2026 – date TBC)
- Following this, a shadow authority will be set up, with elections taking place in 2027
- Vesting day April 2028





Questions