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17 September 2008

Dear Mr Anwer

RE: STRUCTURAL REVIEW - SUFFOLK

You will recollect that I wrote to you on 30 July 2008 setting out the Suffolk Police Authority's provisional view on the draft proposals for Norfolk and Suffolk published by the Boundary Committee. The Authority has now had opportunity to reach its fully considered position upon the proposals.

I am very mindful of the need for the Boundary Committee to be presented with the evidence to support the views of stakeholders. Accordingly I enclose with this letter the information and evidence considered by the Authority at its meeting on 12 September 2008. This comprises:

1. Report PA08/78 by the Chief Constable.
2. Additional Summary Report by the Chief Constable to accompany Report PA08/78;
3. The Chief Constable's notes of his oral presentation to the Authority on 12 September 2008 and concerning the 12 reasons for Lowestoft to remain in Suffolk.

These papers set out the issues in relation to the unitary proposals from a professional policing perspective.

On the basis of this evidence the Authority resolved that its position on the unitary proposals was as follows.

Firstly the Authority considered, by a majority, that for the purposes of providing policing services and addressing crime and disorder a unitary pattern of local government would be preferable to the current two tier model of local government.

Cont'd.....

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Secondly, and unanimously, the Authority stated that it would work with whichever pattern of unitary government is ultimately decided upon by the Secretary of State.

Thirdly, and unanimously, the Authority considered that in order to deliver an effective and efficient policing service to Suffolk, Lowestoft must remain in the county and within whichever unitary option is agreed upon for Suffolk.

Fourthly, by a majority, the Authority considered that the preferred unitary option, to facilitate the better delivery of policing, would be the single unitary option covering the whole of Suffolk but which must include Lowestoft.

The documents enclosed with this letter provide the full rationale and evidence for its decision. In summary it must be stressed that the Authority would be most concerned should a unitary model be selected for Suffolk which does not include Lowestoft. There is a significant risk, should this occur, that the Home Secretary would alter the policing boundary of Suffolk so that Lowestoft would move into Norfolk for policing purposes. This will involve a transfer of resources which would lead to Suffolk, in terms of officer strength, becoming one of the smallest in the country. The loss of Lowestoft is also likely to result in a disproportionate decrease in budget as the funding formula for Government grant is weighed towards geographic area, population and deprivation. These issues will raise serious questions about the ability of the Suffolk Force to provide the full range of local and protective policing services in an efficient and effective way.

I am aware that the Chief Constable will be writing to you directly to express his professional policing perspective upon the proposals. Should you have any queries on the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Gulshan Kayembe
Chair of Suffolk Police Authority

SUFFOLK POLICE AUTHORITY

PA08/78

REPORT TO: POLICE AUTHORITY

DATE: 12 SEPTEMBER 2008

TITLE: LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW – BOUNDARY COMMITTEE PROPOSALS FOR UNITARY AUTHORITIES IN SUFFOLK

AUTHORSHIP: CHIEF CONSTABLE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

1. The following report provides information to assist the Police Authority in its consideration of the Boundary Committee draft proposals for Unitary Local Government in Suffolk.
2. The Police Authority asked the Chief Constable to complete research on the impact of the draft proposals as far as policing in the county was concerned, to include a risk assessment on the likely impact on Suffolk Constabulary should the Lowestoft area move into a unitary authority with Norfolk.
3. The report provides evidence against the Boundary Committee proposals. This has then been considered against the five criteria for assessment, which should be satisfied in any submission to the Secretary of State put forward by the Boundary Committee. The report is based on providing the most effective and coherent policing service to the residents of Suffolk.
4. There are significant financial risks associated with this report which are highlighted in the risk section.
5. There are other significant risks associated with those risks and these are summarised in Section 7.

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendation 1

Members are requested to consider the information in this report, which has been provided to assist in the development of the Authority's response to the Boundary Committee Proposals by 26 September 2008.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Letter to the Boundary Committee on 9 May 2008 from the Chief Constable.

ADDITIONAL PAPERS:

- 1 PA08/46 Report on the Boundary Committee Review to the Police Authority on 23 May 2008.
2. PA08/66 Report to the Police Authority on the Boundary Committee Review on 25 July 2008.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The following report provides information to assist the Police Authority in its consideration of the Boundary Committee draft proposals for Unitary Local Government in Suffolk. The Police Authority asked the Chief Constable to complete research on the impact of the draft proposals as far as policing in the county was concerned, to include a risk assessment on the likely impact on Suffolk Constabulary should the Lowestoft area move into a unitary authority with Norfolk.
- 1.2 The report provides evidence against the Boundary Committee proposals. This has then been considered against the five criteria for assessment, which should be satisfied in any submission to the Secretary of State put forward by the Boundary Committee. The report is based on providing the most effective and coherent policing service to the residents of Suffolk.
- 1.3 Two presentations are planned for Wednesday 3 September 2008 from the lead authorities for the development of the submissions for the Rural Suffolk Unitary and the Ipswich and Felixstowe Unitary (known as the North Haven Unitary). These presentations are important in determining the best pattern of local government to complement policing activity and a verbal update on the conclusions arising from the presentations will be given at the Police Authority meeting on 12 September 2008.
- 1.4 The five criteria for assessment by the Boundary Committee, which should be satisfied in any submission to the Secretary of State, are:
 - (a) Attract a broad cross section of support
 - (b) Provide for strong, effective and accountable strategic leadership
 - (c) Deliver the empowerment of citizens and communities, so that all communities have power and resources to influence the decisions that affect them in their localities
 - (d) Provide value for money services – services should be provided effectively, efficiently and in an integrated and coherent way, ultimately driving up customer satisfaction; and
 - (e) Be affordable – the change to a unitary structure should deliver value for money and be self-financing, with any transitional costs being capable of being paid back within a five-year period.
- 1.5 The following report deals with each of the above Boundary Committee criteria in turn and provides information and evidence against each of the criteria in terms of how the proposals for patterns of unitary authorities impact on the provision of an efficient and effective police service in Suffolk.

2 STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS, ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

- 2.1 The Boundary Committee proposals state, “We are conscious of the attachment which many people feel towards their existing county. We are not making any recommendation for change to the boundaries of the historic and ceremonial counties of Norfolk and Suffolk; such matters fall outside the remit of this review”. However, Section 32 of the Police Act 1996 gives power to the Home Secretary to alter policing areas by order. The circumstances in which

the power may be exercised include where it appears to them to be in the interests of efficiency or effectiveness.

- 2.2 Legal advice has been sought on whether this provision would impact upon the policing area of Suffolk should Lowestoft form part of the unitary solution in Norfolk. The advice confirms that there is clear potential for the provision to be engaged. Further, it is also clear that if the power is exercised the Home Secretary must exercise it to ensure that one of the new authority areas is not divided between two police areas.
- 2.3 There is accordingly a significant risk that on the basis of the unitary proposals for Suffolk as they currently stand, that if adopted, the policing area of Suffolk may be redefined by the loss of Lowestoft.

3 IMPACT OF THE DRAFT PROPOSALS AGAINST THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE SUCCESS CRITERIA AND THE IMPACT ON SUFFOLK CONSTABULARY

(a) Attract a broad cross section of support

- 3.1 Police officers and staff operate closely with their local communities and so have a good understanding of local opinions. Local community contact over the boundary proposals suggest large scale support for the retention of Lowestoft within Suffolk as part of any new local government arrangements for the county.
- 3.2 An assessment of local opinion about the Boundary Committee proposals has been put together since they were published in July 2008. This includes a survey of staff during August 2008; analysis of the submissions posted on the Boundary Committee website up to 31 July 2008; and local intelligence gathering by officers. The outcome indicates strong opposition to both the options from the Boundary Committee and in particular to the proposed move of Lowestoft to a Norfolk based unitary authority. Constabulary officers and staff tend to live and work in their local communities; in the Lowestoft Area, at least 77% of officers and staff live within a ten-mile radius of their place of work. The feedback from staff is that there is strong opposition amongst communities to the proposals to move Lowestoft into a Norfolk based unitary authority.
- 3.3 The internal staff survey confirms this opposition. To date, 164 responses have been received and of those, 123 (74%) do not support either of the options proposed by the Boundary Committee; 27 respondents (16%) would favour the single unitary option (one unitary authority covering the whole of Suffolk, except Lowestoft); 11 respondents (7%) would prefer the two unitary option (minus Lowestoft); and six (4%) did not know.
- 3.4 Most of the respondents were not in favour of moving Lowestoft into Norfolk, although several stated the benefits of a single unitary for the whole of Suffolk, but only if this included Lowestoft.

- 3.5 Respondents were asked what they thought the advantages of the proposed options are. Most stated that there were no advantages with the move of Lowestoft into Norfolk; some stated that the advantages to the single unitary option for the whole of Suffolk would be to reduce the levels of bureaucracy and strategic level partnership activity; and others stated the merits of Lowestoft being combined in a unitary authority with Great Yarmouth because of closer geographic links than with Ipswich; perception of cross border criminality; provision of local health services; and the policing needs of two seaside towns being similar, but these were in the minority.
- 3.6 The main disadvantages of the proposals were as follows:
- The transfer of staff from Suffolk Constabulary to Norfolk Constabulary.
 - Resilience levels for policing the rest of the County.
 - Reduction in force performance for detection rates.
 - The impact of a further structural change following the recent Strategic Options Review changes on morale and retention of staff.
 - The viability of the Constabulary with any reduction in officers and staff.
 - The cost of the changes in structure including any eventual merger with Norfolk.
 - The negative impact on staff morale.
 - The impact on funding and budgets.
- 3.7 The Force Management Board (FMB) also considered the Boundary Committee proposals on 30 July 2008 and agreed that the Constabulary should seek to retain Lowestoft within Suffolk for policing purposes. They went on to agree that if change is necessary, a single Suffolk unitary is currently the preferred position, although the two-unitary option (but only with Lowestoft) provides manageable chunks for policing activity and command structures.
- 3.8 It was also felt that the removal of the main towns of Lowestoft, Felixstowe and Ipswich from the Suffolk Unitary proposal would leave a largely rural area with little urban influence; furthermore transport flows across the Rural Suffolk Unitary mean that towns such as Leiston, Saxmundham and Halesworth would be very remote from the main town of Bury St Edmunds, which would seem to be the logical administrative centre for the Rural Suffolk Unitary.
- 3.9 Finally, the views of Criminal Justice (CJ) partners have been sought and some initial views have been given, however, most CJ partners are considering the Boundary Committee proposals with their management teams during the first two weeks of September in preparation for the deadline for responses on 26 September 2008. Whilst it has not been possible to incorporate the views of the CJ partners in this report, a verbal update will be provided to the Police Authority at the meeting on 12 September 2008.

(b) Provide for strong, effective and accountable strategic leadership

- 3.10 The Boundary Committee options for unitary authorities in Suffolk present difficulties for strategic leadership in terms of policing. The Chief Constable's letter to the Boundary Committee on 9 May 2008 explains the difficulties for a small force with a structure that creates additional partner agencies, which the Constabulary would need to work with to deliver key services such as public safety and social care. The proposal for the Rural Suffolk and North Haven Unitary Authorities potentially doubles the number of statutory bodies that the Constabulary will work with at the strategic level. Clearly, a Single Suffolk

Unitary would retain the current level of strategic leadership required at the Chief Officer level and is therefore far more sustainable.

- 3.11 The Force Management Board agreed that territorial police command would be most effective with a single unitary option. However, the resilience of command structures across the County would be affected by the proposal to move Lowestoft into a Norfolk Unitary due to any potential reduction in officer numbers, and this would be particularly difficult to sustain at the Superintendent rank in terms of ensuring sufficient numbers of superintendents are available to deal with on-call arrangements across the County.
- 3.12 A further area for consideration is that of span of control and the ability to tackle issues effectively. The concern with a single large unitary option would be whether this structure would be sensitive enough to give sufficient focussed effort to bear on local issues, for example, 40% of crime is committed in the current Ipswich Borough Council area. Dealing with these issues might better be achieved in a smaller configuration.

(c) Deliver the empowerment of citizens and communities, so that all communities have power and resources to influence the decisions that affect them in their localities

- 3.13 Safer Neighbourhood Teams are now firmly part of the way the Constabulary delivers frontline policing and Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT's) are now the cornerstone of Suffolk Constabulary's policing style. We know the SNT's make a positive impact in local areas and work closely with partners to solve local problems in their communities. We also know that the public and our partners are very positive about their SNTs and have been embedded in the heart of their communities.
- 3.14 The 'One Suffolk' proposal submitted to the Boundary Committee in May 2008 includes the concept of Community Boards and is supported in the Boundary Committee Proposals (July 2008), as well as the Liberal Democrats proposed 'Area Committees' as methods of ensuring neighbourhood empowerment. The report states that Community Boards would "have a wide range of powers, bringing together citizens, unitary councillors, police, doctors, head teachers with a devolved budget in order to address the specific challenges that localities face". It goes on to say that "Area Committees would also include partners such as the police and they would meet quarterly to provide strategic leadership on traffic and planning issues".
- 3.15 Both options broadly appear to compliment and enable the SNT policing concept by providing an effective partnership group at the local level to consider, amongst others, local policing issues.
- 3.16 Clearly any differences in approach by multiple unitary authorities would impact on the SNT structure and its effectiveness at the local level, as well as the Constabulary's ability to develop different approaches at the SNT level. It is hoped that the presentations on 3 September 2008 will clarify this and an update will be provided to the Police Authority on 12 September 2008.

(d) Provide value for money services – services should be provided effectively, efficiently and in an integrated and coherent way, ultimately driving up customer satisfaction; and

- 3.17 The Boundary Committee proposals state that Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth share similarities such as their peripheral nature within their respective counties; low levels of educational attainment; high levels of deprivation, and so on. The arguments given in the report for moving Lowestoft into a Norfolk based unitary authority are based on the social and economic links to Norwich.
- 3.18 Despite this, public opinion indicates a resistance to moving Lowestoft into Norfolk. What may be more practical in terms of policing is closer partnership working between Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth to achieve the benefits described in the Boundary Committee report in relation to the social and economic links, whilst retaining the identity of Lowestoft, which is important to the community.
- 3.19 The Waveney District is a generally high performing area of the Constabulary. The Waveney Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) is also high performing and good improvements in performance have been achieved since 2005/06. Analysis of performance and survey data for the last three full years indicates that the proposed move of Lowestoft to a Norfolk based unitary authority will affect levels of performance in terms of crime and satisfaction and confidence in the remaining areas of the current District.

- 3.20 Table 1 shows a comparison of performance data between the Waveney CDRP, Great Yarmouth CDRP (gaps in the table indicate where comparative data is unavailable due to changes in CDRP boundaries).

	Waveney CDRP			Great Yarmouth CDRP		
	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Population (2006 estimate)	117974	117974	117974	93400	93400	93400
Households (2004 estimate)	50599	50599	50599	41022	41022	41022
Total Recorded Crime						
Number of recorded crimes	9379	9284	8435		10220	8823
Per thousand population	79.5	78.7	71.5		109.4	94.5
Sanction detections	2889	3074	2676			
Sanction detection rate	0.3	0.3	0.3			
Most Serious Violent Crime						
Number of recorded crimes	21	17	19		26	38
Per thousand population	0.2	0.1	0.2		0.3	0.4
Sanction detections	14	11	9			
Sanction detection rate	0.7	0.6	0.5		0.0	0.0
Serious Sexual Offences						
Number of recorded crimes	107	95	89		89	93
Per thousand population	0.9	0.8	0.8		1.0	1.0
Sanction detections	50	44	34			
Sanction detection rate	0.5	0.5	0.4		0.0	0.0
Serious Acquisitive Crime						
Number of recorded crimes	1141	1044	980		1107	874
Per thousand population	9.7	8.8	8.3		11.9	9.4
Sanction detections	152	142	108			
Sanction detection rate	0.1	0.1	0.1		0.0	0.0

Table 1

- 3.21 The table shows steady improvements in levels of recorded crime over the three full-year period. Levels of total recorded crime per 1,000 population are much lower in the Lowestoft CDRP than the Great Yarmouth CDRP. This is replicated across the other categories of crime shown in the table.
- 3.22 The Boundary Committee proposals for the move of Lowestoft into a Norfolk based unitary Authority may impact positively on the performance of any new Great Yarmouth CDRP structure, however, residents of the current Waveney CDRP may be adversely affected by any subsequent reallocation of resources to improve performance across the new CDRP area.
- 3.23 Analysis of the Suffolk Constabulary Public Survey (2007/08) shows that although the move of Lowestoft into a Norfolk based unitary authority is unlikely to impact on force performance in terms of public satisfaction and confidence, it is likely to impact negatively on the local levels of performance in the remaining

parishes of the Waveney District. The following sections highlight where performance will be affected:

- The data indicates that although overall feelings of safety in the area people live are not likely to change, the levels feeling very safe may decrease by around 10% (38% in the current Waveney District, decreasing to 28% with the removal of the Lowestoft parishes proposed to be moved into a Norfolk-based unitary authority). This compares poorly with the force figure of 36%.
- This pattern is repeated amongst respondents feeling safe walking alone at night in their area with a reduction from 15% feeling very safe in the current Waveney District to 8% with the removal of the Lowestoft parishes into a Norfolk based unitary authority. Again, the overall force figure is higher at 14%.
- The proportion of the public who know or recognise a member of their Safer Neighbourhood Team would be substantially lower at 33% from the current above average performance of 45% and against a force average of 36%.
- The proportion of the public who know how to contact a member of their local Safer Neighbourhood Team is currently 40%. The changes to Waveney would indicate a reduction in this level to 33% against a force figure of 41%.
- Levels of confidence that the police in the neighbourhood understand the crime and disorder issues that matter to residents is currently higher than the force average of 59%, at 65%. This is likely to reduce to around 56% with the boundary proposals. Again, this pattern is repeated in levels of confidence in the police to deal effectively with these crime and disorder issues, with the current level of 60% reducing to 53% against a current force average of 54%.

3.24 An assessment of patterns of crime and criminality in the Waveney District shows that in terms of detected crime, 73% (2305) of offenders live in the Lowestoft area. Analysis of data for the last twelve months shows that of the 3150 offenders caught committing crimes in Lowestoft, 73% actually reside in the town of Lowestoft and the rest live in the following areas (in descending order):

Carlton Colville	130 offenders per year (4%)
Kessingland	92 offenders per year (3%)
Norwich	92 offenders per year (3%)
Great Yarmouth	75 offenders per year (2%)
Beccles	48 offenders per year (2%)
London	17 offenders per year (1%)
Ipswich	13 offenders per year (0.4%)
Halesworth	13 offenders per year (0.4%)
Other	365 offenders per year (11.5%) made up of 120 different locations

3.25 The data indicates that there are no strong links between Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft in terms of the flow of criminality and in fact, Lowestoft is more likely to be affected by criminality moving northwards from the south of the town.

3.26 The Boundary Committee highlights that services should be provided in an integrated and coherent way. The proposals for the move of Lowestoft and the split of the rest of the County into the Rural and Haven unitary authorities present difficulties in the current policing structure in Suffolk. For the purposes of policing and support activities, the County is currently split around the main population hubs of Lowestoft, Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich where the main policing resources are located. The removal of Lowestoft will result in vast parts of the east of the County being without such a hub. This will make resourcing the area more difficult and costly changes to the Estate may be necessary, particularly if Bury St Edmunds becomes the administrative centre and 'hub' for the rural Suffolk unitary authority.

3.27 In addition, the Public Finance Initiative (PFI), Police Investigation Centre (PIC) project is not due to be completed until 2010. If there is a gap between the implementation of the Boundary Committee Proposals and the completion of the PIC project, then custody for the north of the county up to the new unitary boundary would have to be dealt with at Ipswich or Halesworth. The impact of this is increased resourcing in terms of cost and officer time and the impact on the capacity of frontline policing service delivery.

(e) Be affordable – the change to a unitary structure should deliver value for money and be self-financing, with any transitional costs being capable of being paid back within a five-year period.

3.28 The Police Funding Formula and subsequent grant allocation is based on a complex range of indicators, but three of the strongest elements are geographic area, population and deprivation. Generally, the more sparsely populated an area, the less funding it will receive; more affluent areas receive lower levels of funding and the areas with higher levels of deprivation attract higher levels of funding. With the move of Lowestoft into Norfolk and the subsequent loss of 25% of the population in an area of high deprivation, will clearly affect levels of funding. This is likely to disproportionately reduce the amount of central Government funding for policing.

3.29 The Boundary Committee proposals may have a significant impact on the resourcing levels across the county. The Lowestoft area is currently policed by 150 police officers supported by 63 police staff. If Lowestoft moved into a Norfolk based unitary authority, staffing levels in the Norfolk and Suffolk Constabularies would need to be recalculated. These changes might also result in the relocation of officers and this will have a cost implication to the Constabulary.

3.30 The Force Management Board also raised concerns about the costs involved in the possible relocation of officers and staff; the impact on staff morale; and the impact of any adjustment to the Constabulary establishment which could reduce the forces resilience to deal with major incidents and Police Support Units (PSU) for example.

3.31 In terms of funding levels, there is 19% difference in levels of police precept between Norfolk and Suffolk. However, the difference in the overall level of council tax for Norfolk and Suffolk is minimal (approximately 1.6% for a Band D property) and so is unlikely to be a major issue in terms of equalisation.

- 3.32 Finally, several functional units not associated with the policing of Lowestoft are located within the Lowestoft area and it is likely that these would need to be moved if the area moved into Norfolk. For example, the Victim Care Centre covering the north of the county would need to be relocated. Consideration of the current Estates Strategy will also need to take account of the proposed changes.
- 3.33 In conclusion, the Boundary Committee proposals present various challenges for the Constabulary and Authority for the delivery of an effective policing service to the County. The Constabulary will ultimately work with any pattern of unitary decided upon. The loss of Lowestoft to a Norfolk Authority is the most problematic. However, the multiple unitary options also present difficulties, some of which may be mitigated by the presentations on 3 September 2008. A brief summary of where the research leads us is provided below and will be updated at the Police Authority meeting on 12 September 2008, following the presentations and discussions with lead authorities on 3 September 2008.

Move of Lowestoft to a Norfolk based unitary authority

- 3.34 Suffolk without Lowestoft and the parishes to the south is no longer a coherent County. The proposal to move Lowestoft is unpopular with staff and local residents across the county. The loss of a large population centre will impact on neighbourhood policing, satisfaction and confidence and the resilience to deal with on-call arrangements.
- 3.35 The current Waveney CDRP is high performing with high levels of satisfaction and confidence and this good performance will be impacted on by any changes to the current arrangements.
- 3.36 Most crime in Lowestoft is home grown in Lowestoft/Suffolk and moves northwards into the town rather than south. Therefore the proposal is unlikely to improve levels of crime within the Town.

Rural Suffolk Proposal

- 3.37 This option without Lowestoft presents difficulties with the predominantly rural nature of the unitary that would be created. It fails to provide a natural hub to the north of the county beneath Lowestoft and consequently will impact on policing at the neighbourhood level; increase transportation costs; impact on levels of satisfaction and confidence particularly in the area south of Lowestoft. The option also presents difficulties for strategic leadership.
- 3.38 The inclusion of Lowestoft within this proposal would present a better model for policing with the retention of the 'hub' at Lowestoft police station, however the issues of strategic leadership and delivery of neighbourhood policing remain with any multiple unitary option

North Haven Authority

- 3.39 This proposal presents the same difficulties as those described with the rural Suffolk option (3.36-3.37). Differences in models of community empowerment will potentially impact on the Constabulary's SNT model and its ability to deliver consistently at the neighbourhood level; and the difficulties in servicing more than one unitary authority at the strategic leadership level still stand, but might be mitigated if two unitary authorities shared functions such as Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and Safeguarding.

4 SERVICE AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The previous sections detail the service and financial implications of the Boundary Committee proposals, and no further issues arise than those already described. An assessment of the risks has also been included throughout the report; however, a further summary is included in Section 7.

5 POLICE AUTHORITY DUTY

- 5.1 The Chief Executive advises that in considering its position on this issue, the Authority should have full regard to the nature of its primary duty which is to secure the maintenance of an efficient and effective police force for Suffolk.

6 RISK

- 6.1 An assessment of the impact on policing of the Boundary Committee proposals to move Lowestoft into a Norfolk based unitary authority has been carried out and described throughout the report. The following points summarise the key risks to the Constabulary and Authority:

Legal

- 6.2 The proposed move of Lowestoft into a Norfolk based unitary authority is likely to result in the Home Secretary making an order to alter the policing areas of Suffolk and Norfolk. This will adversely impact on the Constabulary by effectively reducing the size of Suffolk Constabulary area, thereby potentially creating one of the smallest forces in the country.

Performance

- 6.3 The report has highlighted that the removal of Lowestoft into Norfolk will result in the remaining area of the Waveney District having the lowest levels of satisfaction and confidence in the force. Whilst this will not significantly impact on overall force performance, it is unfortunate that this currently well-performing area will suffer the consequences of moving Lowestoft into Norfolk.
- 6.4 There is a risk to overall performance levels with multiple and/or conflicting unitary authority structures. This may be particularly felt at the SNT level if separate models of policing at the neighbourhood level are required because of multiple unitary arrangements. However, smaller Unitaries may also enable this issue to be dealt with more effectively.

Resilience

- 6.5 There is a risk to the delivery of operational policing at the territorial command level with any loss of officers to Norfolk, which may reduce the numbers of superintendents available to deal with on-call arrangements across the County.

Estate

- 6.6 The loss of Lowestoft as one of the main 'hubs' of policing in terms of providing a centre for the deployment of resources in the north of the County will need to be considered within a revised Estates Strategy.
- 6.7 Consideration will also need to be given to how the area south of Lowestoft will be policed.

Finance

- 6.8 It is anticipated that there will be a reduction in funding for the constabulary because of the assessment criteria in the police funding formula.
- 6.9 There is likely to be increased transport costs to cover the rural parts of the East of the County if Bury St Edmunds becomes the administrative hub of the rural Suffolk unitary authority.
- 6.10 Also increased transport costs arising from any gap in the implementation of the Boundary Committee proposals and the completion of the PFI PIC project in 2010.
- 6.11 An assessment of the cost of relocation of staff affected is required.
- 6.12 The changes to the Estates strategy including the relocation of services such as the Victim Care Centres will need to be costed, but could be considerable.

Collaboration

- 6.13 The work to date on collaboration with Norfolk Constabulary may be derailed because of having to restructure within an imposed timescale.

Human Resources

- 6.14 The internal survey of staff suggests that the morale of staff will decline if Lowestoft moves into Norfolk.

Summary

- 6.15 There is a need to keep this issue under close review in terms of an entry in the Authority's Risk Register.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

Members are requested to consider the information in this report, which has been provided to assist in the development of the Authority's response to the Boundary Committee Proposals by 26 September 2008.

BOUNDARY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW OF SUFFOLK –

ADDITIONAL SUMMARY REPORT TO ACCOMPANY POLICE AUTHORITY REPORT (PA08/78)

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this additional summary report is to:

- State my preferred position on the Boundary Committee proposals for Suffolk based on my professional policing judgement.
- Provide a summary of how this position has been arrived at.

2. Chief Constable's Position

2.1 I consider a unitary pattern of local government is better than the current two-tier model for policing and effectively and efficiently tackling crime and disorder.

2.2 I strongly believe that in order to deliver a local, effective and efficient policing service to Suffolk as a whole, Lowestoft must remain in the county within whichever option of unitary authority is finally agreed.

2.3 Any decision to move Lowestoft into a Norfolk based unitary authority is likely to result in Suffolk Constabulary being one of the smallest forces in the country.

2.4 I intend to oppose the proposal to move Lowestoft into a Norfolk Unitary Authority. The subsequent comments in this briefing note are therefore based on the assumption that either option presented by the Boundary Committee must include Lowestoft.

2.5 The Constabulary will work with whichever pattern of unitary government is ultimately presented to the Secretary of State at the beginning of 2009 and I believe the two patterns proposed both have some merits and some disadvantages for local policing in Suffolk which I have weighed in my considerations of what I believe to be best in the interests of policing the whole county.

2.3 The two unitary model (including Lowestoft) (Option 1) could be workable for the Constabulary; however, I believe the best option for the delivery of policing to the county of Suffolk and my preferred option is option 2 – a single unitary authority covering the whole of Suffolk (including Lowestoft).

2.4 The following table gives a summary of the two models proposed by the Boundary Committee.

	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	OPTION 1 Ipswich & Felixstowe authority (North Haven) and a Suffolk authority (Rural Suffolk)	OPTION 2 Suffolk unitary authority
1.	Broad cross section of support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The survey of staff, local community intelligence, information from Criminal Justice partners and comments on the Boundary Committee website indicate this option is less favoured than the single unitary option. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A larger proportion of residents, staff and partner organisations favour this option. It is very important to note that this option has the greatest support from agencies and organisations with whom we need to work closely with in respect of tackling crime and disorder as well as broader criminal justice partners.
2.	Strategic Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For this option to be attractive it has to work for the whole county. North Haven provides a natural command and coherent basis for policing Ipswich and its immediate environment. This coherence is weaker in the Rural Suffolk proposal where there seems little connection between towns and villages in the east and the west without a strong strategic centre to coherently bind communities across the area. It seems likely that Rural Suffolk without a clearly identifiable centre might intentionally or unintentionally be subdivided to make it workable which has the potential to weaken strategic leadership. Two unitary authorities will each have different priorities, processes and working practices that will involve additional overhead costs for agencies and organisations needing to align with them in terms of strategic planning and operational service delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to preserve the good work already achieved that resulted in the Suffolk Community Strategy that creates a 20-year vision for the county. There is considerable 'buy-in' across agencies and organisations to delivering this vision that was only agreed within the last year. It was developed for the county of Suffolk including Lowestoft. Agencies and organisations across the sectors have aligned their resources and effort to delivering this strategy and the recently agreed LAA2. A single unitary is most likely to build upon the extensive work completed thus far providing strong strategic leadership for delivery across the county.

3.	Crime and Disorder Partnership Working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put simply this option is likely to double the number of statutory partnerships that the Constabulary will be required to support and be involved with. This could be potentially mitigated if the new unitaries agreed to shared functions but this cannot be assumed or imposed by the Boundary Committee. This option has the potential to create more meetings to be attended at the expense of time being spent on frontline service delivery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One set of strategic partnerships will avoid duplication and make best use of time and resources both in terms of strategic leadership and frontline service delivery. Such partnerships might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suffolk Strategic Partnership Safeguarding children arrangements MAPPA Road Safety Board
3.	Empowerment of citizens & communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the information presented to date this area appears least developed in peoples thinking across both options. The Safer Neighbourhood Team structure provides a firm basis for empowerment at the local level and from a police perspective is well developed. This could be workable under both options. Under Option 1 there is likely to be two models of local empowerment that could require different approaches from the Constabulary and other county-based organisations and agencies that might present additional challenges. 	
4.	Value for Money/Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have not seen detailed costings regarding the two options although I am briefed that a single unitary model is likely to deliver greater cost efficiencies than a two unitary model. From a police perspective there will be a need to assess our structures in order to ensure we are aligned with the new unitary pattern in order to best deliver services in a new partnership environment. It is difficult to assess one option above the other on this criterion. 	
5.	Criminal Justice Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our work with other criminal justice partners is absolutely central to us delivering our core business. Suffolk Criminal Justice Board is a national 'Beacon Board' and is at the forefront of leading a number of criminal justice reforms. These rely upon and have been achieved through strong partnership working in its truest sense, including collocation of resources etc. Changes that adversely impacted upon this would be unhelpful. The Suffolk Criminal Justice Board favours a single unitary option including Lowestoft. Many partners, e.g. Probation Service and Crown Prosecution Service, are county-based services that would operate best in a single unitary model. 	

6.	Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option potentially gives greater focus to operational issues specific to the two new proposed unitary authorities. • In North Haven this would give focus in a relatively tight geographical area to the issues generated by Ipswich that currently account for around 40% of police business. • The Rural unitary would bring a focus on rural issues across the more sparsely populated parts of the county. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The challenge for this option is to balance the potential advantages of strong strategic leadership with structures that are 'locally sensitive' in terms of delivering local operations and services to meet the particular needs of given neighbourhoods/locations. • It will need to balance the needs of both urban and rural parts of the county. • This is potentially achievable through the proposed structures for local empowerment, possibly based on Safer Neighbourhoods, which still need further development.
7.	Leveraging investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option has the potential to fragment and divide the impact the county might have in successfully bringing funds into Suffolk. • North Haven with its strong economic drivers and crime and disorder challenges might successfully leverage investment in its own right but this is likely to more difficult in the rural unitary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A single unitary option potentially gives more weight to the leveraging of investment for the county as a whole through a united county effort.

12 Reasons for Lowestoft to Remain in Suffolk

1. Viability of the Force

- Proposed area has 25% of population
- If went to Norfolk unitary expect Home Secretary might direct it is policed by Norfolk Constabulary – based on legal advice
- Transfer of resources – exact numbers to be negotiated
- Outcome will be one of the smallest Forces in country – maybe the smallest!
- Question viability to provide the full range of policing services, ie local to protective services
- Likely to raise the merger debate as a consequence

2. Disproportionate adverse impact on Force budget

- Funding formula weighted towards geographic area, population and deprivation
- Outcome potentially a disproportionate decrease in budget

3. Potential loss of resources from Lowestoft if it moves to Norfolk

- In 2007/08 Waveney CDRP 71.5 crimes per 1000 population compared to Great Yarmouth CDRP 94.5
- If Lowestoft in a unitary model with Great Yarmouth there may be a temptation or operational imperative to redirect resources from Lowestoft to address crime level in Great Yarmouth

4. Council Tax difference needs equalising

- Police element of Council Tax 19% lower in Suffolk than Norfolk for Band D – Figures?
- This would need equalising which has a cost – potentially to the Lowestoft tax payer
- Overall Council Tax level this reduces to 1.6% difference

5. There is not a strong link to Great Yarmouth and Norfolk in terms of criminality

- BC proposals assume strong links between GY, Norwich and Lowestoft – this is not supported by prisoner flows
- Last year 3150 prisoners – 73% from Lowestoft town and just 2% from GY and 3% from Norwich
- (Limitation = this is just the offenders we caught!)

6. There is very limited support for Lowestoft moving to Norfolk

- Staff survey not in favour
- Monitoring the BC website shows little support
- Community contacts little support
- Strong cultural, social and economic links with the wider Suffolk

7. The Suffolk Community Strategy vision for 2028 included Lowestoft

- The Suffolk Community Strategy has just been finalised following extensive consultation creating a 20-year vision for Suffolk – this envisaged a Suffolk including Lowestoft
- Organisations and agencies have committed resources and invested on the basis of delivering this, including LAA2

8. Lowestoft has a core role to play in delivering of criminal justice functions to Suffolk

- Most criminal justice partners have structures organised on a county basis
- Suffolk Criminal Justice Board made up of key agencies supports retaining Lowestoft in Suffolk
- Fragmentation will create inefficiencies across the agencies
- The Constabulary has some CJ functions in Lowestoft that serve the county

9. Policing the north and north-east of the county will be more challenging with the loss of our second largest resourcing base

- Lowestoft Police Station is a resourcing base to serve both the town and the areas to the south of Lowestoft – these latter areas would become more difficult to police with the response potentially coming from further afield
- Satisfaction levels in these areas is already lower than the town highlighting the existing challenges policing these areas
- Operationally it is significant to have the critical mass of our second largest station at the north of the county

10. Resilience across the range of policing functions will be significantly reduced

- A drop in officer numbers will reduce command resilience which will place additional pressures on running the Force
- It will become more difficult to maintain and mobilise the full range of specialist resources needed to police the county from a significantly reduced workforce

11. We are a people business and significant disruption might result in a temporary drop in performance

- The Force is currently a good performing Force
- There has been considerable change in the Force to achieve efficiency targets to date
- Further major change that potentially involves transferring officers and staff to another Force has the potential to disrupt and damage morale
- This will inevitably result in a temporary drop in performance

12. Policing benefits can be achieved through collaboration without the need to change boundaries

- Suffolk and Norfolk Constabulary already have a 'preferred partner' arrangement and are progressing collaborative work to address the protective services capacity gap and sharing support functions, e.g. HR and ICT
- We are at an advanced stage of a joint PFI custody project to provide 6 state of the art custody facilities across the two counties to be shared by both Forces