

South Suffolk union?

BOUNDARIES: Committee to consider various options

By Graham Dines
Political Editor

PLANS to redraw the map of Suffolk move nearer this week as the Boundary Committee for England talks to political leaders about just how many parishes should be absorbed into a Greater Ipswich unitary authority.

One option being considered is to include Felixstowe and both the Deben and Shotley peninsulas in what would in effect be a South Suffolk unitary.

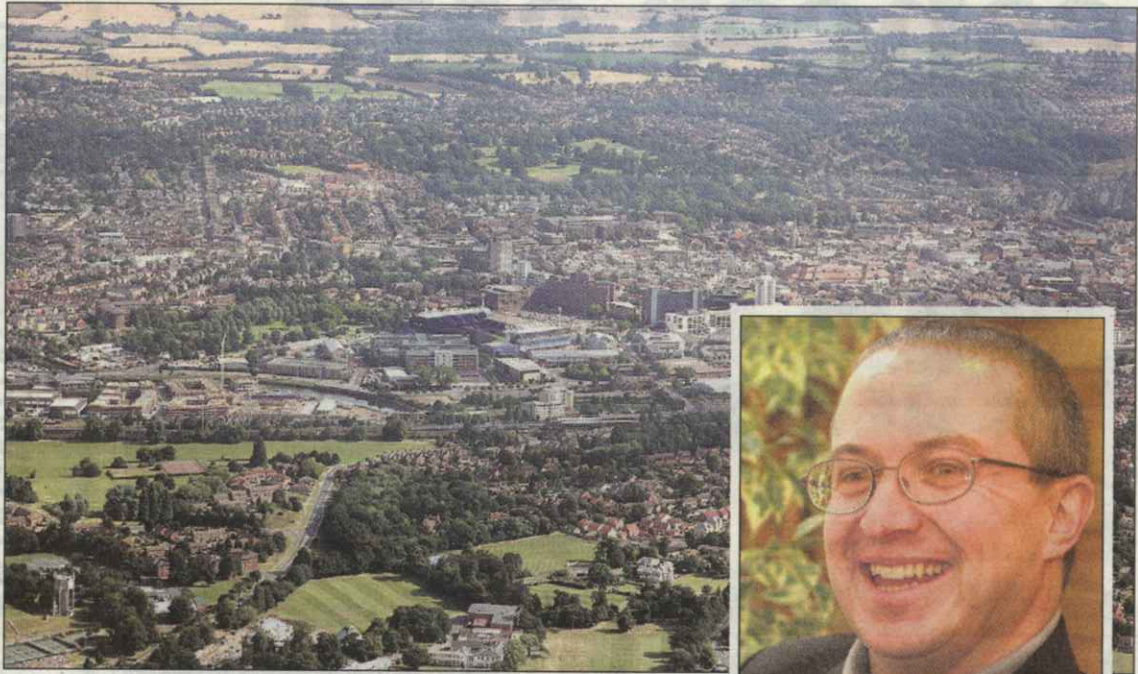
In December, the Government rejected Ipswich's standalone unitary bid and the county council's pathfinder proposals.

It asked the impartial Boundary Committee to come up with plans for a unitary solution for Suffolk, including the possibility of a Greater Ipswich and also the merger of Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth in what would become a cross-border urban "Yartoft" unitary around the rivers Waveney and Yare.

Just how far Ipswich's boundaries extend is being discussed this week.

The leaders and deputy leaders of the three political parties on Ipswich council met the Boundary Committee yesterday and on Friday, it will talk to the political leaders and chief officers of Suffolk and district authorities.

Ipswich council's executive will discuss a number of proposals next Tuesday, one of which would create a unitary authority in South



AUTHORITY LINES: An aerial shot of Ipswich and, inset, Ipswich Labour leader David Ellesmere who doesn't want a large-scale land grab

Suffolk with a population of more than 200,000.

The first option encompasses Ipswich and the parishes of Belstead, Pinewood, Sproughton, and Wherstead which are currently in Babergh, Bramford, Claydon, Barham, Great Blakenham, Whitton from Mid Suffolk, and Foxhall, Kesgrave, Nacton and Purdis Farm from Suffolk Coastal.

Minor variations are to be considered which would include either or both of Rushmere St Andrew

and Martlesham from Suffolk Coastal.

The second proposal would include all of option one plus Felixstowe and the Deben peninsula while a third option would be for one and two plus the Shotley peninsula.

Ipswich's opposition Labour leader David Ellesmere is likely to speak against a massive Ipswich land grab, which would see mostly Tory voting parishes absorbed into the borough. "We want a tight,

urban Ipswich," he said.

The BC's recommendations will be published in the summer for public consultation being firmed up for ministerial approval.

With St Edmundsbury's council leader John Griffiths pushing for a West Suffolk unitary, the shape of the new county will depend on what the committee's thinking is on Waveney, and particularly Lowestoft.

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