

Local Government Review – Norfolk - Key Dates

2006

5th May Ruth Kelly MP appointed Secretary of State when the Department for Communities and Local Government was born out of the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, within which David Miliband was the Local Government minister responsible for drafting the white paper which was to become the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007)

STAGE 1 Developing Concepts

26th Oct Written invitation from Secretary of State to councils inviting unitary proposals, made in anticipation of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, currently at Bill stage

2007

25th Jan Norwich City Council submission of unitary Norwich proposal based on existing city council boundaries as there as 'no reasonable likelihood the proposal would meet the criteria'

28th June Hazel Blears appointed Secretary of State in cabinet reshuffle

25th July DCLG notify Norwich of intention to ask Boundary Committee to look at local government structures in Norfolk

17th Oct Initial meeting between Boundary Committee and Norfolk Councils

30th Oct Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act receives Royal Assent

30th Nov Initial Boundary Committee deadline for submission of 'concepts' for future local government in Norfolk by interested parties

5th Dec WMS by Local Government Minister of intention to refer Norwich's unitary proposal to the Boundary Committee

2008

6th Feb WMS by Local Government Minister announcing that the Boundary Committee have been asked for their advice relating to Norwich's unitary proposals under s4 of the LGPIH Act 2007

Guidance given by Secretary of State to the Boundary Committee

25th Feb Meeting between Boundary Committee and Norfolk Councils

STAGE 2 Boundary Committee consider concepts and prepare draft proposals

3rd March Boundary Committee formally launch their review in Norfolk

11th April Deadline for submission of revised concepts to Boundary Committee. 21? were received.

22nd April Boundary Committee write to proponents of concepts with further questions

9th May Deadline for submission to Boundary Committee of responses to further questions

21st May Meeting of Boundary Committee presented with officer report recommending a variant of the two-unitary 'east-west' model

STAGE 3 Draft proposals published with 12 weeks consultation

7 th July	Boundary Committee publish their draft proposals for unitary local government in Norfolk, recommending single county unitary with two further proposals having 'merit', being two-unitary 'doughnut' and 'wedge' models
14 th July	Pre-action protocol letter submitted to Boundary Committee
22 nd Sept	First financial workbooks published
26 th Sept	End of consultation period

STAGE 4 Financial workbooks published

Nov	<i>need some further dates in here, including number of iterations of workbooks and when the final IFA reports were published / revised etc</i>
13-14 th Nov	Norfolk Council's Judicial Review hearing

STAGE 5 Analysis of unitary patterns meeting affordability criterion with 4 weeks consultation

19 th Nov	First report of Independent Financial Consultants to Boundary Committee
27 th Nov	You Gov survey conducted on behalf of the Norfolk 'five' (until 1 st Dec). Clearly shows lack of public support for a change to unitary
28 th Nov	Judicial review judgement (Norfolk councils)
5 th Dec	Letter from DCLG to Boundary Committee extending deadline for provision of advice to 13 th February 2009 and incorporating further guidance, notably on the approach to the term 'in aggregate'
8 th Dec	Independent Financial Consultants write to Boundary Committee regarding implications of 'in aggregate' guidance
12 th Dec	Notification of intention to appeal
24 th Dec	Original deadline for publication of Boundary committee's advice

2009

8 th Jan	Judgement of Justice Cranston in the Devon case
20 th Jan	Second report of Independent Financial Consultants to Boundary Committee
23 rd Jan	Letter from Max Caller to Local Government minister advising that the Boundary Committee won't be able to meet the 13 th February deadline following the judgement in the Devon case
9 th Feb	Letter from DCLG to Boundary Committee extending for a second time the deadline for provision of advice to 15 th July 2009
13 th Feb	Second deadline for provision of Boundary Committee's advise
18-20 th Feb	Court of Appeal hearing of Norfolk case

STAGE 6 Further draft proposals published with 8 weeks consultation

12 th March	Third report of Independent Financial Consultants to Boundary Committee
19 th March	Further draft proposals published by Boundary Committee, options as before but without linking with Lowestoft
25 th March	Court of Appeal judgement published; Norfolk councils win majority of points
27 th March	Boundary Committee publish 3-page financial summaries for both options, in identical format but underpinned by different assumptions

15th April Boundary Committee confirm it would take into account representations received after the 14th May and before the 3rd June 2009

STAGE 7 Boundary Committee prepare advice for secretary of state

15th May End of 8-week consultation period (was 12 weeks previously)
28th May Joint response from five Norfolk district councils submitted to Boundary Committee
15th May Norwich City Council submit workbooks for the 'Rural Norfolk' unitary
3rd June Secretary of State (Hazel Blears) resigns,
5th June John Denham MP appointed Secretary of State, the fourth to be involved in this process
15th June Fourth report of Independent Financial Consultants received by Boundary Committee but not published
22nd June MORI survey of 3,525 commissioned by the Norfolk 'five' in the field until 5th July
29th June DCLG Letter setting out the approach that the Secretary of State will take in coming to a decision on new unitary councils following receipt of Boundary Committee's advice
10th June Judgement of Justice Foskett in Suffolk Judicial review, supporting Suffolk's claims
14th July Boundary committee write to Secretary of State, stating that they will not be able to meet the 15th July deadline for the provision of advice following the Suffolk judgement
15th July Third deadline for the publication of Boundary Committee's advice to the Secretary of State
18th Sept Original close of 9 week consultation period (extended by the Secretary of State from the statutory minimum of 4) before Suffolk ruling handed down
1st Sept MORI research of attitudes to structural change provided to Boundary Committee, no acknowledgement was subsequently received
2nd Dec Court of Appeal judgement handed down in Suffolk case; Suffolk lose on all substantive points

STAGE 8 Boundary Committee provide advice to Secretary of Stage

7th Dec Boundary committee provide advice to Secretary of State at the fourth attempt, recommending single county unitary in Norfolk (and Devon)
Notification from Secretary of State that consultation will run until 19th January 2010 (six weeks compared to 9 planned in the summer)
Fourth report of Independent Financial Consultants to Boundary Committee published for first time

2010

19th Jan Close of consultation period
2nd Feb Earliest date that the Secretary of State could make a decision on unitary structures in Norfolk
8th Feb Letter from Peter Housden to Secretary of State in capacity as accounting officer asking for confirmation of decision
10th Feb Letter from DCLG stating that he has decided not to implement the Boundary Committee's proposal for a single unitary for Norfolk, but rather to implement a Norwich unitary on existing boundaries.

- Draft implementation Order laid before parliament.
- 11th Feb We – BCKLWN – had been working on a Judicial Review with other Norfolk councils but stopped on this announcement. This process was then taken over by the county council.
- 22nd Feb Response provided to House of Lords Merits of Statutory Instruments Committee
- 28th -29th April Judicial Review hearing between Devon & Norfolk County Council's and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
- 25th May Letter from Bob Neill MP to Leader's of Norfolk councils reiterating that the Queen's Speech included a bill to revoke the implementation orders creating a Norwich unitary and asking councils not to take any more steps towards implementation
Letter also sent by Paul Rowsell to Norfolk Chief Executives stating same as above.
- 21st June Judgement in Norfolk judicial review handed down, quashing the implementation orders
- 25th Nov Letter from Paul Rowsell to Norfolk Chief Executives, stating that the Local Government Bill completed its parliamentary stages (on this date) and that Royal assent was expected imminently.
- 16th Dec The Bill receives Royal assent. It "gives effect to the Coalition Government's commitment to put a stop to existing proposals for restructuring of councils in Norfolk, Devon and Suffolk. It would prevent implementation of any of the existing proposals for a single-tier local government structure - which in practice relate to these three counties - under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007".
<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/localgovernmenthl.html>