

MLSG response below to the Secretary of State for the Communities to the Proposed Local Government Arrangements in Suffolk

The Minsmere Levels comprise an area of very sensitive habitats, about 50% of which are located within the Minsmere RSPB Reserve. The management of the Levels is a complex task involving coastal protection and egress of large volume of inland water through a sluice.

The Minsmere Levels Stakeholders Group (MLSG) which comprises a wide range of local community interests including all the surrounding town and parish councils, landowners, residents and visitors to the area. It was established two years ago to represent issues of concern about the care and management of the Levels, and in particular to press for better co-ordination between the official bodies with responsibilities for them.

MLSG expressed a very strong view to the Boundary Committee that there was a considerable need to reduce the fragmentation within the local authority structure by integrating county and district local authorities so that there could be clear and unambiguous strategic leadership in dealings with central government and its agencies.

MLSG was appalled at the Boundary Committee's initial preference for a Suffolk divided into two authorities, with the result that oversight of the Suffolk coastline would be split.

MLSG is therefore very pleased that the Boundary Committee is recommending that there should be one unitary authority for the whole of Suffolk.

We trust that the Secretary of State will act swiftly to implement this recommendation.