



# NEWS

**For immediate release**

**Date: 29 November 2018**

## **Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government launches consultation on unitary proposal and announces postponement of elections**

Consultation by the Secretary of State (SoS) over plans to restructure local government in Northamptonshire which could include two unitary authorities has started today.

The Government consultation has launched following proposals submitted by Northamptonshire councils back in August 2018.

SoS, James Brokenshire has announced that he will consult with all principal councils in Northamptonshire, principal councils neighbouring Northamptonshire, Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce, South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership, the Northamptonshire Police and Crime Commissioner, local health bodies, the University of Northampton, and representatives of the voluntary sector. He also welcomes views from any interested people, including local residents and organisations.

The consultation period will run for eight weeks until 25 January 2019 and is available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-proposed-reorganisation-of-local-government-in-northamptonshire> Paper copies will also be available shortly in public offices and buildings of all the Northamptonshire councils.

Mr Brokenshire has also announced today that following a request from the eight Northamptonshire councils, he will be postponing district and parish elections that were due to be held in May 2019 until May 2020. Should he decide to implement the proposal of two unitary authorities, it would have meant district and parish councillors serving only one year before unitary authority elections would be held in 2020. He explains: "Elections in such circumstances risk confusing voters and would involve significant costs that would be hard to justify...Accordingly, I have concluded that irrespective of whatever my future decision might be on the restructuring proposal, the right course is to postpone these elections."

Leader of East Northamptonshire Council, Steven North, adds: "We're pleased that the consultation has started and hope that all involved take the opportunity to have their say on this important proposal.

"In August 2018, East Northamptonshire Council decided to dissolve itself following the recommendations made in the Max Caller report into Northamptonshire County Council. We focussed on putting forward a proposal that is right for our residents.

"We welcome this further consultation by the SoS into the proposal we submitted and look forward to hearing the response in spring 2019.

"We also very much welcome the postponement of the elections. We agree with the Secretary of State and the lead inspector at NCC when they say that it would be wrong for councils to pick up election costs for just one year of service when it's possible there will be unitary elections in 2020. As well as the cost saving, this also allows us more time to focus on the process of setting up a shadow authority and delivering on the proposals for Northamptonshire."

**-ENDS-**

## **Editor's notes**

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