



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

27 March 2018

Ian Vincent
Acting Chief Executive
Northampton Borough Council
Guildhall
St Giles Square
Northampton
NN1 1DE

Dear Ian,

Invitation to submit a proposal for a single tier of local government in Northamptonshire

The Secretary of State today has announced in a statement to Parliament how he proposes to proceed following receipt on 15 March 2018 of the Northamptonshire County Council Best Value Inspection report. In his statement he also announced that he is inviting the principal councils in Northamptonshire to develop and submit locally led proposals for establishing unitary authorities across the county which will be right for the communities and people they serve. Accordingly, he is exercising his powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("2007 Act") to invite Northamptonshire councils to make proposals for restructuring local government, and I enclose the statutory Invitation to your council along with statutory guidance from the Secretary of State.

As you will see, a proposal in response to the Invitation can be submitted by an individual council or jointly with some or all of the other councils in Northamptonshire. Proposals should be received no later than Friday 27 July 2018.

The Invitation is to submit what the 2007 Act refers to as a 'combined proposal'. A combined proposal may be, for example, a proposal for two or more Type B proposals under the Act (a Type B proposal being a proposal for a unitary authority for the area of one or more districts which form part of a county area), or a proposal consisting of one or more Type B and Type C proposals (a Type C proposal being a proposal for a unitary authority for an area which is part of a county and one or more adjoining districts in an adjacent county). It should be noted therefore that a proposal for a single unitary authority covering the entirety of Northamptonshire is not an option under the Invitation.

Paul Rowsell CBE
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The guidance, to which any authority making a proposal must have regard, sets out what any proposal should seek to achieve, and the matters to be taken into account in formulating a proposal. In particular, any proposal should seek to achieve unitary structures which are likely to:

- Improve local government and service delivery across the area;
- Be based on a credible geography; and
- Command a good deal of local support.

These are therefore the criteria against which any proposal will be assessed.

Other factors that should be taken into account in formulating any proposal include the findings and recommendations of the Northamptonshire County Council Best Value Inspection report, and wider regional issues such as how a new authority might be able to boost housing delivery and contribute to the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford growth corridor.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch, and if it would be helpful, I would of course be happy to meet you and your colleagues.

Yours sincerely,



P ROWSELL

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS FOR A SINGLE TIER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, in exercise of his powers under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, hereby invites any principal authority for an area that is the whole or part of the county of Northamptonshire to make, in accordance with paragraphs 1 to 3 below, a combined proposal that there should be a single tier of local government for areas which together comprise an area of which that county is the whole or part.

1. Any proposal must be made by 27 July 2018.
2. In responding to this invitation an authority must have regard to the guidance from the Secretary of State set out in the Schedule to this invitation, and to any further guidance on responding to this invitation received from the Secretary of State.
3. An authority responding to this invitation may either make its own proposal or make a proposal jointly with any of the other authorities invited to respond.

Signed by authority of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.



P Rowsell

A senior civil servant in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

27 March 2018

SCHEDULE

Paragraphs 1 to 2 below set out guidance from the Secretary of State.

1. A proposal should seek to achieve for the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government, that is the establishment of unitary authorities:
 - a. which are likely to improve local government and service delivery across the area of the proposal, giving greater value for money, generating savings, providing stronger strategic and local leadership, and which are more sustainable structures;
 - b. which command a good deal of local support as assessed in the round overall across the whole area of the proposal; and
 - c. where the area of each unitary authority is a credible geography consisting of one or more existing local government areas and having a substantial population that at a minimum is substantially in excess of 300,000.

2. The following matters should be taken into account in formulating a proposal:
 - a. A proposal should describe clearly the single tier local government structures it is putting forward, and explain how, if implemented, these are expected to achieve the outcomes described in paragraph 1 above.
 - b. The need for evidence and analysis to support a proposal and any explanation of the outcomes it is expected to achieve, including evidence of a good deal of local support.
 - c. The report “Northamptonshire County Council Best Value Inspection: January – March 2018”, in particular the inspection team’s recommendation on the preferred way forward involving “the 2 unitary (West and North) model”.
 - d. The wider context for any unitary authorities in Northamptonshire around plans for growth. This includes authorities’ potential contributions to the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor; and the potential for agreement between authorities and the Government to unlock ambitious housing delivery, above the level proposed in the Government’s Local Housing Need assessment.

- e. That there should be extensive local consultation about any proposal before it is made, seeking the views by appropriate means of residents, stakeholders and partners including local enterprise partnerships, health bodies, businesses, and other organisations including voluntary organisations. The means of seeking views may include professionally led open consultation questionnaires, representative household surveys, surveys of parish and town councils, workshops, telephone interviews with other major stakeholders, and inviting written submissions.

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Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Rishi Sunak MP
Minister for Local Government

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04 MAY 2018

Dear Cllr Nunn,

Thank you for your joint letter, with Councillors Danielle Stone and Sally Beardsworth of 20 April to the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, about Northampton Borough Council's proposal for a unitary authority. I am replying as this matter falls within my ministerial responsibilities.

I welcome your council's intention to put forward a joint proposal for unitary local government across the county. As the Secretary of State told the House of Commons, we are keen that the councils in Northamptonshire think about what is right for their communities and the people they serve, and come forward with proposals.

Under the legislation, any proposal made in response to the Invitation issued on 27 March 2018 must put forward two or more unitary councils whose area comprises whole existing principal local government areas - that is whole existing districts. I would also draw your attention to the statutory guidance which the Secretary of State has issued set out in the Schedule to the Invitation, and to which councils must have regard when formulating any unitary proposal; that guidance states that any proposed unitary authority should have a population that at a minimum is substantially in excess of 300,000.

As you know, councils have until 27 July 2018 to submit their proposals to me, having first conducted extensive local consultation. I look forward to receiving your submission.

RISHI SUNAK MP