

DRAFT

Dear Paul,

I refer to your letter dated 14th May 2019, our subsequent meeting with you on 15th May 2019 and the further clarification you provided at the Leaders Oversight Board on 12th June 2019.

I write to confirm our Council's position, having established this through our own formal governance processes.

Shadow Authorities

As discussed with you previously, we are keen to establish Elected Shadow Authorities after the elections in May 2020. Whilst we note that it would be possible to establish a predecessor non-elected Shadow Authority earlier, we believe that this would cause role confusion and added cost. Our preference is that the Councils within the West Northamptonshire Unitary area, through a Joint Committee, undertake the preparatory work leading up to the establishment of the elected Shadow Council. This joint working between the Councils will have the benefit of member involvement and will be better placed to undertake the considerable work that needs to be done.

Electoral Arrangements

In response to the questions posed in your letter, referred to above, we agree that the elections should be held on the basis of three-member wards resulting in 93 members in the West Northamptonshire Unitary Council.

We agree that the District/Borough Elections currently scheduled for 2020 should be cancelled. Whilst a consequence of this will be that the current District/Borough Councillors will have been in position for 6 years leading up to the establishment of the West Northamptonshire Unitary Council, it would not, in our view, be a good use of tax payer monies to hold District/Borough elections for a term of only one year. The electorate would also likely be confused with the various elections, Parish, District/Borough and Shadow Authority.

Parish elections are scheduled to take place in 2020. Our view is that these elections should go ahead as planned. However, if the Council's proposals for the next election for the Unitary Council to take place in 2025 is accepted and implemented by the Structural Changes Order, then the Parish Election should then be extended to 2025, to align with the Unitary Council election cycle.

Regarding by-elections, our view is that the normal rules should continue to apply, namely that any elections to fill a casual vacancy would not be held within 6 months of the date when the Councillor would have normally retired.

Yours Sincerely

George Candler

Chief Executive