



Ministry of Housing,
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Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP
*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local
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Dear Tom,

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

I am writing to let you know that I am announcing that I have decided to implement with one modification the proposal to replace all the existing Northamptonshire councils with two new unitary councils which seven Northamptonshire councils submitted to me. Implementation is subject to the Secretary of State for Education issuing a statutory direction requiring the establishment of a Children's Trust and to Parliamentary approval of the necessary secondary legislation.

The modification I have decided to adopt is to extend the period for fully implementing the new arrangements so that the new councils are fully operational from 1 April 2021 rather than from 1 April 2020 as set out in the proposal. It is with this modification that I believe we can be confident there will be a safe and effective transition to the new service delivery arrangements across the whole of Northamptonshire, including for those crucial services supporting the most vulnerable.

To support the transition, I have decided to establish shadow authorities. I envisage the May 2020 local elections in Northamptonshire will be elections to those shadow authorities rather than to district councils, with the district elections currently due on that date being cancelled. In line with the approach in the proposal for elections to the new unitary councils, I also envisage the elections to the shadow authorities will be held on the basis of three-member wards resulting in the North Northamptonshire Council having 78 members and West Northamptonshire Council having 93 members. Those so elected would be members of the new councils when these go live in April 2021. Elections to parish councils will proceed as scheduled in May 2020. I intend to confirm these electoral arrangements shortly after hearing any views the district and county councils may have on this.

I now intend to prepare and lay before Parliament a draft of the necessary secondary legislation which, if Parliament approves, would give effect to my decision. Establishing the new unitary councils will be a significant step towards ensuring the people and businesses across Northamptonshire can in future have the sustainable high-quality local services they deserve. I welcome your commitment to drive forward the establishment of the new councils and transforming local service delivery.

Yours sincerely,

RT HON JAMES BROKENSHIRE MP