

Luke Hall MP
Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local
Government
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

8th September 2020

Dear Minister

Local Government in Nottinghamshire

Nottinghamshire County Council intends to seek your support to progress its plans for a single unitary council covering the whole of the County. We write in our capacity as the Leaders of every Borough and District Council in Nottinghamshire and as the Leader of Nottingham City Council.

Our localities are very different and the political leadership of our Councils is very different and yet we are united in our opposition to a single unitary Council being the only option on the table.

Nottinghamshire County Council has developed its proposal in isolation. It has not attempted to engage with us on any alternative options and has failed to demonstrate an open mind to any option other than the one that preserves and enhances its own identity and responsibilities.

A single unitary Council for Nottinghamshire would attempt to serve 828,000 people. This is way beyond the acceptable size threshold that you have articulated and that we expect to be confirmed in the forthcoming White Paper. Only Birmingham City Council would represent more people.

Scale can deliver economies, but too big breeds bureaucracy and inflexibility. Nottinghamshire County Council is already a very large organisation that struggles to react swiftly and responsively to local needs. Each of us has examples in our areas where economic growth and public service delivery are being frustrated and thwarted because the County Council is remote from the communities that it serves and is too cumbersome to move quickly.

Disregarding the existence of Nottingham City and its role within the conurbation and beyond would be a fundamental mistake. A genuine commitment to levelling up the prosperity of our County and City requires at the very least a consideration of options that include Nottingham City.

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In many tangible ways, we have demonstrated our commitment to public service reform and are acutely aware of the financial pressures that all of our organisations are under. However, we strongly reject Nottinghamshire County Council's rush to beat a deadline to suspend the 2021 County elections. This is no basis on which to re-design the governance of local services. Our residents deserve so much better. What's needed is meaningful engagement as part of a collaborative and strategic approach to properly identifying and appraising various options. Our existing local government arrangements have largely been in place for 46 years. It would not be acceptable or reasonable to be given just a matter of weeks to respond to a proposal from Nottinghamshire County Council and to develop our own alternatives in that time.

The purpose of this letter is to seek your support to invite us to develop alternative proposals to a single, County-wide unitary Council over the forthcoming year. If we're hurried into a response that is driven by a dash to meet an election deadline, tax payers' money will be wasted on an adversarial process as we pull apart the County's case and consider our legal positions. Our preference is that we work together and alongside the County Council, Nottinghamshire Police, our local NHS, Town and Parish Councils and other key partners, taking account of the White Paper before considering various options.

Yours sincerely



Jason Zadrozny
Leader, Ashfield District Council



Cllr Simon Greaves
Leader, Bassetlaw District Council

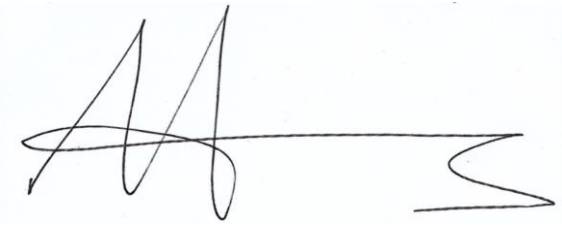


Cllr Milan Radulovic MBE
Leader, Broxtowe Borough Council

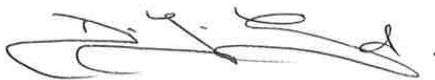
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Cllr John Clarke
Leader, Gedling Borough Council



Mayor Andy Abrahams
Leader, Mansfield District Council



Cllr David Lloyd
Leader, Newark and Sherwood District Council



Cllr Simon Robinson
Leader, Rushcliffe Borough Council



Cllr David Mellen
Leader, Nottingham City Council (Unitary Council)