

COUNCIL – 4th NOVEMBER 2019

ITEM 8 POSITION STATEMENTS

A: Unitary Status

The Labour Group has requested that a Position Statement regarding the proposed Unitary status proposals from Leicestershire County Council be presented at the meeting.

The Leader, or his nominee, has produced the following position statement:

As councillors may be aware, the County Council has recently published a business case in relation to its proposal for a single new unitary council based on the County Council's boundaries.

As Council will appreciate from the previous update, any changes to the structure of local government can only be made by parliament, by the introduction of statute, with a bill to abolish previous structures, and to create a new authority.

Such a procedure would require significant time and would require the support of MPs to carry it through the various stages to completion.

It has been recognised that government is unlikely to proceed with such a process without the broad support of local MPs in the area, and the backing of the majority of councils and councillors, both at County and District level.

All seven County MPs continue to express their opposition to the proposal put forward by the County Council, most recently on the 16th October, in a letter to the leader of the county council, copied to district leaders.

To date the County Council has acknowledged that there is currently no mechanism to progress their detailed business case proposal.

We know that detailed business cases are time consuming and expensive to produce. The district leaders have supported the MPs view, that to expend up to £400,000 on an alternative proposal would be inappropriate, given that there is currently no mechanism, nor burning desire by residents, for structural change.

If national policy changes as a result of the election on 12th December, then we will obviously react accordingly, with any fresh Charnwood policy positions taken to Cabinet and Council.

In the meantime, the seven District and Borough councils in Leicestershire continue to work collaboratively to deliver highly-effective and efficient services to residents.

It is the District and Borough Councils collective view that better and cheaper services can be delivered through greater collaboration while keeping services local to the people who use them.

There continues to be an open invitation to the County Council to work with us on ideas for future collaboration.