

## **Consultation on Northants local government reform is now closed**

Consultation on proposed local government reform in Northamptonshire has now closed, with over 5,000 responses confirmed.

Final numbers from the consultation, which ended at the weekend (22 July), should be available within the next week and responses will be collated by Opinion Research Services, the company employed to carry out the survey.

These responses will help the eight councils in Northamptonshire – seven districts and boroughs and the county – to devise a proposal for how the structure of local government might look in Northamptonshire from 2020.

The proposal, which must be submitted to the Government by 31 August, comes as a result of a call from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, in response to the best value inspection of Northamptonshire County Council.

It was outlined that the proposal “must command a good deal of local support” and take account of comments in the best value review which recommended that a two-unitary model be developed.

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has asked that the county’s eight authorities submit a proposal that meets the following criteria:

- A single countywide unitary is explicitly excluded as an option
- Each new proposed authority must have a population substantially in excess of 300,000
- The proposal must be based on existing council boundaries

Along with the public questionnaire, the consultation has also included a representative telephone survey, focus groups with randomly selected residents in each district and borough, and engagement with other stakeholders ranging from local businesses to parish councils.

All feedback from the consultation will be used to inform and develop the proposal, which will then be considered by each of the eight councils in August ahead of the Government’s submission deadline.

ENDS

Notes to editors

In addition to the criteria set out by the Secretary of State, Government has stated:

- Only one proposal will be accepted, not a range of options
- It must demonstrate clear potential for savings
- It must command a good deal of local support
- Due consideration should be given to recommendations in the Best Value Report
- Any solution should prioritise the Government’s wider housing and growth agenda
- Extensive consultation must be carried out