

## BOROUGH OF KETTERING

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Local Government Reform Advisory Committee</b>	Item 6	Page 1 of 3
<b>Report Originator</b>	Managing Director, Graham Soulsby	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i>	
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All	19 <sup>th</sup> June 2019	
<b>Title</b>	<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM – GOVERNMENT DECISION AND UPDATE</b>		

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Government decision about local government reform in Northamptonshire was published on 14<sup>th</sup> May – this reports explains the decision, the next steps in the process, and seeks members' views.

### 2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 By reference to the previous minutes of this committee, members will recall that at the time of the last meeting we were awaiting the decision of the Government about the future arrangements for Local Government Reform in Northamptonshire.
- 2.2 Subsequently, a Government decision was communicated on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> May, via a written ministerial statement.
- 2.3 All members of the council were sent a copy of the ministerial statement shortly after it was published.
- 2.4 Rather than repeat the contents of the statement in this report – attached (**Appendix 1**) is a copy of a letter that was sent to the Council's Managing Director (from Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government) on the same day.
- 2.5 Looking forward, the key elements of the letter are contained in the section 'The Decision' – this part of the letter is reproduced below;

#### ***The decision***

*Accordingly, on the basis of the assessments and judgements which the Secretary of State has reached as set out above, he has decided to implement the proposal, modified so that the new councils are fully operational from 1 April 2021.*

*Implementation is subject to Parliamentary approval of the necessary secondary legislation. It is also subject to the Secretary of State for Education issuing a statutory direction requiring the establishment of a Children's Trust to span the*

## BOROUGH OF KETTERING

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Local Government Reform Advisory Committee</b>	Item 6	Page 2 of 3
------------------	---	-----------	----------------

*two proposed unitary councils, which with the support of the Secretary of State, he is currently minded to do.*

*To support the transition, the Secretary of State has decided to establish shadow authorities. He envisages 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, he also envisages 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 the 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. He intends to confirm these electoral arrangements shortly after hearing any views the district and county councils may have on this. If your council has any views, I should be grateful to receive these as soon as practicable.*

- 2.6 In accordance with the request contained at the end of the above, this committee is asked for its views on the specific matters outlined. In essence, the key issue is whether the committee supports the idea of the shadow arrangements coming into being after the elections have taken place in May 2020. Informal discussions between Leaders and Officers at the eight local authorities concluded that the proposal / process that is outlined in the letter from MHCLG seems a sensible way to proceed.
- 2.7 Although not specifically mentioned in the letter, some of our neighbouring local authorities have also asked their members whether there is a preference should there be a need for a by election in the period between May 2020 and March 2021. The view of professional officers at this authority is that the existing statutory rules should continue to apply (i.e., there would be no by election in the final 6 month period only), however members of the committee are also asked whether they have a view on this.
- 2.8 On Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June, the eight local councils jointly issued a publication titled 'a prospectus for change'. This was made available to members of the council (and the public) on the day it was released – it is also available at the following link:

[https://www.kettering.gov.uk/downloads/file/18672/prospectus\\_for\\_change](https://www.kettering.gov.uk/downloads/file/18672/prospectus_for_change)

## BOROUGH OF KETTERING

Committee	<b>Local Government Reform Advisory Committee</b>	Item 6	Page 3 of 3
-----------	---	-----------	----------------

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Government Reform Advisory Committee is asked for its views on the following;

1. Whether members agree with the suggested approach contained in the letter from MHCLG (dated 14 May 2019);
2. If members have any preference in relation to KBC member vacancies that may occur in the period May 2020 to March 2021.

---

#### Background Papers:

MHCLG Letter - attached

#### Previous Reports/Minutes:

Local Govt. Reform Advisory Committee 30<sup>th</sup> January & 10<sup>th</sup> April 2019