

Future Northants

CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Local councils play important roles in residents' lives and it is important that you have a say in how services are delivered in the future. Please read the consultation document or go online to www.futurenorthants.co.uk for information about the proposals. To give your feedback, complete this questionnaire and return it FREEPOST to arrive by **22 July 2018**; or you can complete online via the webpage above by the same date.

Northamptonshire's councils have appointed Opinion Research Services (ORS), an independent research company, to manage the questionnaire responses and other consultation feedback. ORS will produce an independent consultation report in which feedback from individual members of the public will be anonymous. However, where feedback is submitted by a representative on behalf of an organisation, an elected representative or someone acting in their official capacity, this may be attributed.

All the questions are entirely optional, and any information that you provide in response to this consultation will be processed by ORS in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act and the EU General Data Protection Regulation. Information will only be used to inform this consultation and any personal information that could identify you will be kept for no more than 1 year after any decisions have been finalised. For further information, please see www.ors.org.uk/privacy

There are currently eight local authorities providing council services across Northamptonshire in a 'two-tier' structure, in which services are divided between the County Council and seven borough or district councils. Unfortunately, the County Council has over-spent its budget in previous years and faces significant on-going budget deficits, as a result of which the government has taken the unusual step of appointing external Commissioners to take over many of the County Council's functions. Furthermore, the government has now written to all eight councils inviting them to urgently co-operate in putting forward proposals by the end of August to restructure local government in Northamptonshire.

Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we need to make changes to respond to these challenges?

PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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In response, the councils are considering a proposal that the number of councils (the county council and seven boroughs or districts) should be reduced.

Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree that there is a need to reduce the number of councils in Northamptonshire? PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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The government has defined a set of criteria, and suggested that instead of the current arrangement where a county council and a number of district councils run different services, a number of unitary (or 'single tier') councils would be appropriate for Northamptonshire. This is where one local authority runs all the council services in a given area.

Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that a number of unitary councils should be introduced in Northamptonshire? PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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From the options that meet the government's criteria (please see page 4 of the consultation document), all eight Northamptonshire councils are considering a proposal that the current two-tier system of eight councils should be abolished, and be replaced **by two new single-tier or unitary councils**:

- » **North Northants:** which would comprise the areas of East Northamptonshire, Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough councils
- » **West Northants:** which would comprise the areas of Daventry, Northampton and South Northamptonshire councils

The proposal for two unitary councils is intended to treat all parts of the county fairly, simplify local government and make efficiency savings more achievable, aiming to deliver services in a sustainable way.

Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the specific proposal above, to replace the existing councils with two, new unitary councils: North Northants and West Northants?

PLEASE TICK ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

IF YOU DISAGREE WITH THE SPECIFIC PROPOSAL ABOVE, PLEASE TELL US WHY IN Q5 BELOW

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Q5. If you have views on the proposal or any further comments, please tell us. If there is any alternative option which meets the government's criteria (on page 3 of the consultation document) that you think we should consider, please explain the alternative option and tell us why you think this would be better.

PLEASE ANSWER IN THE BOX BELOW AND CONTINUE ON A SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

There are many factors for the councils to consider when thinking about the structure of local government, including:

- » **Accountability:** democratic decision making that can be locally influenced and ensuring residents know how to raise issues to their local councillor and how to have a say on future service delivery
- » **Quality:** frontline services that are sustainable, cost-effective and equipped to deliver good local services in the long-term
- » **Local identity:** a recognised local area that reflects how residents live their lives and how businesses operate
- » **Access:** keeping services as local as possible for as many residents as possible
- » **Value for money:** reducing duplication, increasing economies of scale and improving efficiencies

Understanding the levels of importance attached to each of these factors will help the councils assess the pros and cons of its proposal and any alternatives that emerge during the consultation process. The feedback will also be taken into account in the detailed design of any future model.

Q6. Please rate how important you think each of these factors is using a whole number between 0 and 10, where "10" means that it is critically important and "0" means that it is of no importance.

PLEASE WRITE IN A NUMBER BETWEEN "0" AND "10" IN EACH BOX

Accountability	Quality	Local identity	Access	Value for money
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

As public bodies, councils have a duty to take into account the impact of their decisions on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation), as well as the Human Rights Act 1998.

Q7. Are there any groups protected under the Equality Act 2010 who you believe will be positively or negatively affected by our proposed changes? If so, what could we do to enhance positive or reduce negative impacts?

PLEASE ANSWER IN THE BOX BELOW AND CONTINUE ON A SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

What is your full postcode?

This will help us understand views in different areas

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If you are responding *on behalf of* an ORGANISATION, which organisation do you represent?

Please give us the name of the organisation and any specific group or department.

Please also tell us who the organisation represents, what area the organisation covers and how you gathered the views of members.

PLEASE ANSWER IN THE BOX BELOW AND CONTINUE ON A SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

If you are providing your own PERSONAL RESPONSE, please answer the questions below...

Northamptonshire's councils have a duty to promote equality and want to make sure all parts of the community are included in this consultation, but these questions are optional. All consultation responses will be taken fully into account when making decisions, regardless of whether you provide your details.

PLEASE TICK ✓ ONLY ONE BOX FOR EACH QUESTION

What was your age on your last birthday?

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 16 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55 to 64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16 to 24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 to 74 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25 to 34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75 to 84 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35 to 44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 85 or over |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 45 to 54 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say | |

What is your gender?

- Male
 Female
 Prefer not to say

What is your ethnic group?

- White
 Mixed or multiple ethnic groups
 Asian or Asian British
 Black, African, Caribbean or Black British
 Any other ethnic group
 Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

- Yes
 No
 Prefer not to say

Are you employed by a local authority in Northamptonshire, and/or any local authority which neighbours Northamptonshire?

- Yes
 No
 Prefer not to say

If yes, which local authority/ies employ you?

PLEASE WRITE IN

Are you a councillor for any local authority or Town/Parish Council in Northamptonshire?

PLEASE TICK ✓ ALL THAT APPLY

- No
 Yes – County Councillor
 Yes – District/Borough Councillor
 Yes – Town/Parish Councillor
 Prefer not to say

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

Please return the questionnaire by **22 July** to:
Opinion Research Services · FREEPOST SS1018 · PO Box 530 · Swansea · SA1 1ZL