



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP

*Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and
Local Government*

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local
Government**

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To all Council Leaders in Cumbria, North
Yorkshire and Somerset

22 February 2021

Dear Leader

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN CUMBRIA, NORTH YORKSHIRE AND SOMERSET

Councils in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset have submitted proposals for unitary local government. I am writing to let you know that today I have launched a consultation on all eight proposals that I have received. The consultation document is available online at <https://consult.communities.gov.uk/> and responses may be made on the department's online platform 'Citizen Space' or alternatively by email to unitaryconsultation@communities.gov.uk or in writing to Governance Reform and Democracy, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF. The consultation will run for eight weeks to Monday 19 April 2021.

You will see that we are specifically consulting your council in relation to the unitary proposals for your county area. As the consultation document makes clear, we welcome views from any interested person, including residents, and in addition to consulting councils in the area, we are also specifically consulting neighbouring councils and certain other named consultees. I would however stress that any person or any organisation who is interested may respond and I would ask that your council seeks to bring the consultation to the attention of people and organisations in your local area.

The context for this consultation is the provision in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 which requires that before a proposal for local government reorganisation can be implemented, the Secretary of State must first consult any council affected by a proposal (i.e. a council whose area in whole or in part would become part of a proposed unitary council) that has not submitted the proposal. In addition, the statute provides that the Secretary of State may consult such other persons he considers appropriate.

Once the consultation is concluded, we will decide, subject to parliamentary approval, which, if any, proposals are to be implemented, with or without modification. In taking these decisions we will have regard to all the representations we have received, including those from the consultation, and all other relevant information available to us, and reach a balanced judgement assessing the proposals against the three criteria: whether they are likely to improve local government and service delivery across the area of the proposal, whether they command a good deal of local support as assessed in the round across the whole area of the proposal, and whether the area of any new unitary council is a credible geography.

I can also confirm that we have decided to reschedule the ordinary elections to principal councils in Cumbria, North Yorkshire and Somerset due to be held on 6 May 2021 for one year to May 2022. PCC elections, by-elections to principal councils, and parish and town council elections in these areas will go ahead. This means that in each of the three areas the county council elections will be rescheduled, and in addition in Cumbria elections to Carlisle City Council and South Lakeland District Council and in North Yorkshire elections to Craven District Council. In reaching this decision we have carefully considered all representations received and reached a judgement having regard to the importance of local elections and the risk of holding elections to councils when we are also consulting on their possible abolition. As soon as practicable I will lay before Parliament the necessary legislation to give effect to this decision.

I enclose a copy of a Written Ministerial Statement made today announcing the consultation and the decision on local elections in these three areas.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Jenrick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath the name.

RT HON ROBERT JENRICK MP