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July 2016

Councillor Roy Perry

Leader of Hampshire County Council
Council

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Dear Chairman,

September Workshops For Parish And Town Councils: 'The Future Of Local Government In Hampshire'

I wanted to write to you personally to let you know that the County Council will shortly commence a consultation on future options for local governance in Hampshire. I am particularly keen to ensure that parish and town councils are aware of the background leading to this and have an opportunity to participate fully in the process. With this in mind, I would be delighted if you could attend one of four workshops we will run specifically for parish and town councils during September – please see attached details of the workshops. These workshops are designed to complement the wider public consultation and to allow us to have more in-depth discussions about the implications of any future local government reorganisation and also to explore what opportunities there may be for parish and town councils to have greater influence over local services.

The public consultation will seek views on a range of options including elected mayors, combined authorities and unitary councils. The County Council has always strongly supported the principle of genuine devolution of powers from Whitehall, and indeed further devolution as appropriate. We worked hard with our partners to try to agree a combined authority for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and staunchly defended the two tier system in Hampshire during this process. It was only when we became aware that other authorities were exploring reorganisation options, including unitary schemes, that we felt compelled to consider what would be the best option for Hampshire.

Any potential local government reorganisation needs to be approached with caution, in order to safeguard services and choose an efficient and cost effective model that delivers the best possible outcome for the residents and businesses of Hampshire. For this reason, we commissioned an independent study of the various unitary options, the findings of which are now published on our website for all to consider. Above all, I made it clear at the [County Council's AGM](#) that, given the potential risks associated with this issue, we are not prepared to make any recommendation to Government about reorganisation, without first listening to the people of Hampshire.

What is clear is that whatever option the public favour, there is a genuine opportunity for town and parish councils to play an even stronger role with greater influence to shape their communities where they want it.

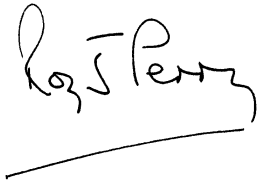
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I very much hope you or a representative from your council will be able to attend one of our workshops and will encourage your parish to participate in the forthcoming public consultation.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roy Perry', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Councillor Roy Perry
Leader
Hampshire County Council