



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
*Secretary of State for Communities
and Local Government*

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

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Chris Heaton-Harris MP
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www.gov.uk/dclg

Our Ref:3625485

Dear Chris

As you will be aware, Max Caller CBE, who I appointed to carry out an independent best value inspection of Northamptonshire County Council in January, sent me his report on 15 March 2018. Having carefully considered his findings, I am now writing to you as a local MP and because of the concerns which you have shared about the Council, to let you know what I am proposing to do in response to the inspector's report.

Based on matters set out in the report, I am satisfied that Northamptonshire County Council is failing to comply with the requirements of Part I of the Local Government Act 1999. That it is, in other words, failing to comply with the best value duty. On that basis, I am minded to exercise my powers of direction in the 1999 Act to appoint Commissioners to take over key functions at the Council in order to stabilise the Council until a longer term solution to its difficulties is in place. Details of my proposals for Commissioners are set out in the "minded to" letter that my officials have sent Northamptonshire County Council today.

The letter has been published at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/northamptonshire-county-council-proposed-intervention>. It sets out proposals to appoint Commissioners to take

on the governance and financial management functions of the Council alongside reserve powers to intervene in other functions should the need emerge. I have not ruled out issuing further Directions should they be required.

Northamptonshire County Council and the District Councils and Borough Councils within the authority's boundaries now have an opportunity to make representations about my proposals for Commissioners. The deadline for representations is 12 April 2018 and I will carefully consider them before making a final decision on whether to appoint Commissioners and, if so, precisely what functions of the council they will perform.

In addition to my being minded to appoint Commissioners, I am also inviting all of the principal councils in Northamptonshire – that is, the County Council and the District and Borough councils – to develop and submit to me proposals for unitary structures to replace the current two-tier system. In order to allow sufficient time for significant local consultation, I am asking for these proposals to be submitted by 27 July 2018. I believe that it is vital that any restructuring is locally-led. The invitation has been sent to all affected authorities and a copy is enclosed.

Thank you for your ongoing interest in this matter: I know we all understand the importance of well-functioning local government to the people of Northamptonshire. Do let me know if you have any questions or comments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Javid', with a small comma at the end.

RT HON SAJID JAVID MP