

# Leicestershire council leaders brand unitary plans 'wholly unnecessary' in latest letter

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They have sent another letter to Councillor Nick Rushton urging him to halt the proposal

Plans to reform local government have been branded "wholly unnecessary" and should be "halted immediately" according to district and borough council leaders.

The seven leaders have again written to Nick Rushton, the leader of [Leicestershire County Council](#), urging him to scrap his plans.

The letter was penned by the leader of North West Leicestershire District Council, Richard Blunt, on behalf of the leaders of Blaby District Council, Charnwood Borough Council, Harborough District Council, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Melton Borough Council and Oadby and Wigston Borough Council.

It was sent on November 7, as scrutiny committees discussed the plans for a unitary authority and invites Coun Rushton to a meeting on December 3 "to discuss how we can work collaboratively in the future".

It is the latest in a number of letters to Coun Rushton urging him to shelve the plans.

Every district council in Leicestershire could be scrapped

The leaders reference a recent letter to Coun Rushton sent by [seven Leicestershire MPs](#) telling him that "now is not the time to carry out a review of local authority structures in Leicestershire".

The letter was apparently sent following discussions between Edward Argar, Andrew Bridgen, Alberto Costa, Alan Duncan, David Tredinnick, Nicky Morgan and Neil O'Brien and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, James Brokenshire MP.

The leaders again said that they will be willing to "work together to identify ways in which services can be delivered more effectively and efficiently across Leicestershire".

They added that they are "keen to investigate opportunities for a collaborative place-based review of council services which would benefit our communities".

In response to the latest letter, Coun Rushton said: "We've started a debate in the county council and within the community about Leicestershire's future.

"I've been clear from the outset that debate is good for democracy and this is why the scrutiny committees of the county council have been meeting to discuss the proposals and other leaders have accepted our invitations to give evidence to help us. Next month, we'll be taking stock of the deliberations."

In a letter to Conservative group members, seen by Leicestershire Live, Coun Ruston addressed the MPs' concerns and said: "The public may say they are happy with the status quo or they may say that they want a single unitary or another unitary option.

"Either way, I will respect these outcomes - but in order to do that, we must have the debate. Debate is healthy.

"In two, or three years' time, we will run out of money and we will only be left trying to run statutory services or what is left of them.

“We must be in a position to plan to avoid such an eventuality - and not become another Northamptonshire, who have had a unitary structure imposed upon them with zero consultation.”

Four scrutiny meetings were held last week where councillors on the children and families, adults and communities, health and environment and transport scrutiny committees quizzed officers about the proposal.

Coun Rushton has told Tory group members that he will "take stock of the process", including the views of the MPs at their next group meeting on December 4.