

Local Government Reorganisation consultation

Local Government Reorganisation is the biggest change to local government in a generation. Rather than separate county, city and district councils, services like bin collections, roads, education and social care will all be under the umbrella of one unitary council. Although I am supportive of streamlining services to save money and help residents access services more simply, I am concerned that the government's proposed size for these unitary councils (with populations of 500,000 people) threaten to lose the local democratic representation that we hold so dear.

I am continuing to meet with officers to ensure we have the information we need to get the best outcome for residents, with the best possible services and the best possible representation by your local councillors.

Whatever your views on Local Government Reorganisation, it's really important that you [have your say in the consultation, which can be accessed online via the council's webpage](#) or by collecting a hard copy from the council office or libraries. While Local Government Reorganisation may seem distant from day to day life, council services that are performed in the background – such as collecting your bins, allocating school places and maintaining the roads – affect us all. That's why I'm encouraging everybody to fill in the survey and have your say to ensure your voice is heard.

The consultation closes on 20 July 2025 at midnight.

If you have any questions or concerns about this, please do get in touch and I will help you the best I can.

4-day week update at Employment and Staffing Committee

From the meeting I attended on Employment and Staffing Committee, I have been left very concerned about the quality of the data that we are relying upon to monitor staff and wellbeing as a whole and in relation to the 4-day week. The meeting started with us being told that an error had been created in the data that had been previously displayed to us in relation to

members of staff having second jobs, and that the figure was lower than had previously been reported.

When I challenged how this error had occurred, given that the data had been reported some time ago, the officers of the council and the independent data firm responsible for drafting the report gave two conflicting reasons as to why the error had come about.

I have flagged how important it is that the data we have when making decisions, especially when it comes to the 4-day week, is reliable, robust and truthful. Given the previous issues of “independent” reports being edited to suit, and now this, I have pushed for even more scrutiny of these reports and raised my concern that the administration has now decided to take staff and wellbeing reporting out of scrutiny and refer it to a governance committee.

The council’s operations need to be fully scrutinised by the appropriate committees, and I feel this move should not be celebrated and we should be concerned. With the help of the chair and vice chair of scrutiny, I have managed to ensure that the 4-day week documents will come to scrutiny, but this is only a few days before full council which is an inadequate amount of time before councillors will be required to make a decision.

I am very concerned that after years of this going on, we finally get a vote based on a report that has been rushed through. This is not only lacklustre, it is completely inadequate circumstances to make informed decisions.

Period poverty campaign returns

It’s really pleasing to see the council is re-running its period poverty campaign, which first began last year after I submitted a motion to council calling for action. Last year, the council helped distribute 407 packs of free, sustainable period products including reusable pads, period pants and menstrual cups to help those in need.

Whilst it is fantastic to celebrate the success of this campaign, it does highlight the sad reality in which some women and girls are living. I hope that this has helped make people’s lives better – we are here for you.

The 2025 campaign will be launched in the autumn, but in the meantime if you need any assistance or have any concerns, please do get in touch.

Pothole Patrols

Staying on the topic of roads, many of you will have seen I am continuing to run regular pothole patrols in our area to ensure we get our roads fixed as soon as possible. Please do visit the [reporting page on my website](#) and follow the link to report potholes near you to the County Council, or please do get in touch and I can report it for you.

From my own reporting, I have already received countless emails confirming repairs will be done – so this is working. Together, we can work to get our roads fixed as I truly believe we in rural areas deserve as much investment in our roads as busier roads get in the City.

£100,000 Allotment Improvement Grant

It is pleasing to see the council is supporting local communities' growing projects with the £100,000 Allotment Improvement Grant fund. The grant is still open for applications and I would encourage anyone involved in an allotment to take a look at the [council's webpage](#) for more information. The grant can be used to improve water access, install pest control measures or improve facilities.

Please do feel free to get in touch if you would like any further information or assistance and I will help in any way I can.

Grants for community groups and parish councils

If you are from a local community group or parish council, I am encouraging you to make the most of the council's available grant schemes. The [GrantGrabber service](#) helps you search for available grants – all in one place.

For further information on receiving a grant for a community project from the council, please visit the [grants webpage](#).

Thank you for reading my report. If I can be of any assistance, please do get in touch.

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