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Sent: 01 September 2021 16:05
To: Nizinskyj, Paul
Cc: COA Reform Derby Group
Subject: Derby City Council Boundary Review
Attachments: Local Government Boundary Commission.docx

Dear Paul,

At the next full council meeting the three other political parties will agree to the council's response. My party does not agree with the response and so I would like to add our perspective on the matter.

Please find attached

Regards

Cllr Alan Graves
Reform Derby Leader
Change Derby Politics for Good through Reform

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Local Government Boundary Commission

Statement by Cllr Alan Graves leader of Reform Derby on Derby City Council

This statement is our party's view on the Local Government Boundary review and should be viewed alongside the council's view taken through the council procedures

Within the council document there are some issues I would like to tease out.

1. Numbers of councillors per ward. It has always been our view that the number of councillors per ward is too many. It is clear that most councillors do very little work towards running the council or supporting their electorate. Three councillors per ward therefore is too high. It would be more pragmatic to have 2 (or even less) councillors per ward. We appreciate the existing numbers are considered alongside the average council. However, that does not necessarily mean the other councils have it right. In practice councils only consider other councils if it suits their agenda. In our view, the council and the electorate would not find any difference to service if the number of councillors reduced to 2 per ward.

2. Additional wards. Currently there is a consideration by government to create larger unitary authorities. It appears this will mean either creating a whole unitary council for Derbyshire or 2 unitary councils within Derbyshire. Derby City is more likely to join up with the district councils: South Derbyshire; Amber Valley; and Erewash. The county council would be abolished as well as these four councils. It seems illogical at this time to alter ward boundaries when a new unitary council would automatically have this requirement. There is a case that spending the money twice would be waste. All this work could be combined and initiated with the Local government reorganisation. This would be an efficient use of government money.

3. The council's document states that only a third of councillors have created any casework through the members services. This shows the low level of work from two thirds of the councillors reinforcing our argument that the authority can operate on lower numbers. In terms of meetings, there are in our view many meetings that are unnecessary. Within the cabinet system structure all overview and scrutiny meetings have no effect on cabinet decisions. Their recommendations are frequently overridden. Therefore, these meetings are irrelevant and designed to create the impression of functionality. Most meetings could be abandoned without any effect on the council decision making. Some meetings are important however, such as Planning and Licensing.

4. On the whole, rather than discuss the merits of reducing councillor numbers or increasing the number wards or indeed altering the current boundaries, it would seem more cost effective and prudent if this process was considered at the same time as the impending local government reorganisation. This would also show the public at large that government is joined up.

Your faithfully

Cllr Alan Graves – leader of Reform Derby