

Gateshead

Personal Details:

Name: Mrs Angela Douglas
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Organisation Name: Gateshead Council (District or county councillor)

Comment text:

Related subject: Local Democracy

Over the last 13 years Gateshead Council has suffered massive budget cuts. We are still recovering from the effects of the pandemic and are now having to deal with the cost-of-living crisis. All these things have had a massive adverse impact on our residents and vastly increased the workload – which has grown enormously - of elected members who are trying to represent constituents and deal with a growing number of those in need of help. In addition, Gateshead Council is also considering joining with other authorities and becoming a new Mayoral Combined Authority. This will bring added responsibilities and workloads to Councillors who will have added scrutiny roles in order to hold the new Executive of the Combined Authority to account. I have always been proud that in Gateshead we encourage people from all walks of life to stand for an accessible public office position. We are representative and reflect the wider community. If workloads were increased and become burdensome and unmanageable to those who combine their home life with public life, it would be unthinkable to exclude a whole swathe of people because they couldn't be a councillor on a full-time basis. People with young families, full-time jobs, caring responsibilities, etc would be unfairly excluded. By narrowing, rather than widening, the criteria of people who can aspire to a public office position, we would be denying democracy. On that basis, any reduction in the number of councillors is therefore not acceptable.

Attached Documents:

None attached