

Gateshead

Personal Details:

Name: Mr Hugh Kelly

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Postcode: [REDACTED]

Organisation Name: Gateshead Council (Parish or town councillor)

Comment text:

Related subject: Crawcrook, Greenside and Clara Vale ward

I am Councillor Hugh Kelly and along with my two ward colleagues, represent just over 7,100 residents in Crawcrook and Greenside ward in West Gateshead.

In my time as Councillor for the last five years, I have experienced a marked increase in case work and requests for help in relation to cost of living pressures. At the same time budget pressures imposed on Gateshead Council means that as we ensure our important statutory duties are met, particularly around Adult Social Care and Children's services, our role as Councillors has taken on more significance as local people work together with us to mitigate the impacts of poverty.

These underlying trends are well understood by the way Gateshead Council and as Councillors, we spend significant time to analyse and formulate policies that seek to improve residents lives within available resources. We have many opportunities through seminars and practical visits to make sure we are well informed of service delivery issues, social trends, and policy changes through legalisation. All Labour Councillors take seriously the role of scrutiny in the Overview committees and we have high levels of attendance and participation.

As the prospect of a Mayoral Combined Authority becomes closer, there is an expectation that additional scrutiny of this new structure will be expected for it to function with full confidence. Therefore existing Councillors can be expected to take on more external roles in the region.

I don't believe any proposals to reduce number of Councillors will bring any benefit to residents, and as our current experiences demonstrate, there are increased demands for our attention. Finally the changing nature of the role of Gateshead Council within the region means we have also to be more outwardly involved, and that additional Councillor time will be needed and not less.

Attached Documents:

None attached