



Parliament gives go-ahead for Northamptonshire's new unitary councils

Parliament has passed legislation to replace Northamptonshire's eight existing councils with two new unitary authorities on 1 April next year.

The Northamptonshire Structural Changes Order has now been approved by the House of Commons and House of Lords, enabling the creation of a new North Northamptonshire Council serving the areas of Corby, East Northants, Kettering and Wellingborough and a new West Northamptonshire Council serving Daventry District, Northampton and South Northants.

The two new unitary councils will start providing services to Northamptonshire's residents and businesses on 1 April 2021 when the eight existing district, borough and county councils will be abolished.

Now the legislation is approved, the next stage will be to set up two new shadow councils to lead the work to create the two new unitaries. Elections will take place countywide on Thursday, 7 May where residents will be able to vote for the councillors that sit on these new North and West shadow councils.

Councillor Martin Griffiths, Chairman of the North Northamptonshire Joint Committee said: "We welcome the certainty that the approval of this legislation brings as we focus our efforts on creating two new councils to deliver more efficient and joined-up services for the people of Northamptonshire. We are working hard to

create two sustainable unitary councils that, while being very different in nature, will be exemplars of how to provide excellent services for our residents.”

Councillor Jonathan Nunn, Chairman of the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee said: “Our councils have a strong track record of working together and we have already made encouraging progress towards shaping the new unitaries whilst we awaited this formal confirmation of the government’s reorganisation plans. There is still much to do between now and next April but we are confident these new unitary councils will deliver improved services that will make a positive difference to people’s lives.”

The West and North shadow councils will run alongside the county, district and boroughs until the existing councils are abolished on 1 April 2021. The new councillors to be elected by residents on 7 May – 78 in the North and 93 in the West – will initially sit on the shadow councils then automatically become elected members of the new unitary authorities from 1 April 2021.

Until the new shadow authorities are established, preparations for the new unitaries are being led by North and West joint committees.

The eight existing councils are working together to prepare for the new unitaries as part of the Future Northants programme, which is currently in the Design phase – to begin drafting how the services for the new unitary councils might be designed.

Residents can find out how preparations are progressing and keep updated on the changes ahead on the Future Northants websites:

North Northamptonshire – futurenorthantsnorth.org

West Northamptonshire – futurenorthantswest.org

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