

Unitary authority plans

The leaders of the district councils in Leicestershire have issued statements about the future of local government in Leicestershire.

Cllr Jonathan Morgan, leader of Charnwood Borough Council, said: “Leicestershire’s MPs have written to the leaders of all seven district councils and the leader of Leicestershire County Council about their respective reviews of the structure of local government in Leicestershire and specifically the County Council’s ambition to create a single unitary council.

“The MPs have made it very clear that in their view, which is supported by the Secretary of State, commissioning any reviews of the local authority structure is 'wholly unnecessary' and any such reviews should immediately stop - which the district councils accept.

“Therefore, this council, along with our fellow district councils in Leicestershire, have agreed to halt our review of structural change in the county.

“My view has always been that the county council proposal for a single unitary authority would fail because it was prepared in isolation and did not receive the required support from any of the county’s districts or MPs.

“While we have always been very open-minded about collaboration and local authority reform in Leicestershire, the driving force behind that willingness to change was the ambition to make our services to residents better and more efficient.

“I’m pleased to say that ambition remains - Charnwood will develop and improve its services, as it has always done, and we will continue to work collaboratively with other councils and partners in order to deliver high-quality services for our customers.”

Joint statement

The leaders of Blaby, Charnwood, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth, Melton, North West Leicestershire, and Oadby and Wigston councils have also issued a joint statement about the situation.

In the statement, the leaders say: “We would like to thank the Leicestershire MPs for their joint letter to all district and county council leaders following their meeting with the Secretary of State to discuss our proposed review of the current model of local government in Leicestershire and the County Council’s promotion of structural reform of local government.

“The conclusion of the MPs, supported by the Secretary of State, that no such change is necessary and work towards it should cease immediately reinforces what the districts have previously stated, that local authority structural reform will only happen if all parties are working together and in agreement.

“We understand and respect their concerns and therefore the district councils will not be pursuing any proposals for structural change.

“Districts have always worked together and we will continue to collaborate with all partners in order to deliver the best possible services to residents.”